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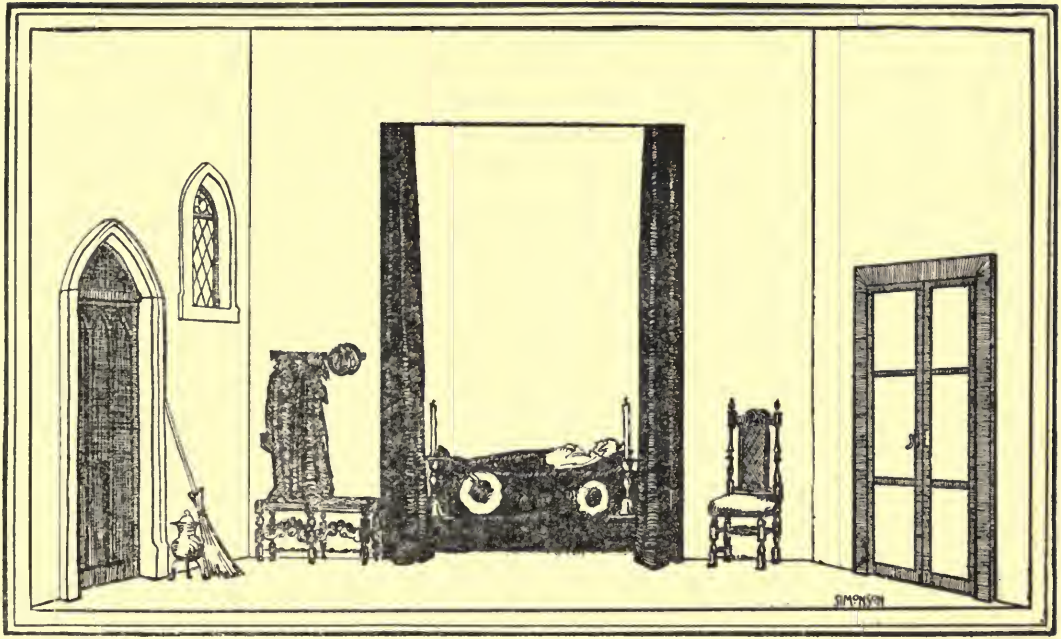

LINE DRAWING OF SETTING FOR *"A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY"*
DESIGNED BY LEE SIMONSON FOR THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYERS

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY

AND FIVE OTHER PLAYS

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

BONI AND LIVERIGHT, INC.
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A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY. A SATIRIC LEGEND IN TWO SCENES

CHARACTERS

Blessed Saint Antony
Gustavus
Achilles
The Doctor
The Pastor
Joseph
A Sergeant of Police
The Maiden Lady Hortensia
Virginia
Valentine
An Old Lady
A Guest
Another Guest
Another Guest
Another Guest

The action passes at the present day in a small provincial town in the Low Countries.

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTONY

First Scene

[*The entrance-hall of an old and spacious middle-class homestead in a small town in the provinces. On the left the front door, giving onto the street. In the rear a small flight of steps leading up to a glass door, through which one enters the house. On the right another door. Against the walls leather-covered benches, a couple of wooden stoves and a clothes rack, on which are hats, a cape and wraps. As the curtain rises, the old drudge Virginia, her skirts trussed up and her legs bare, stands with her feet in wooden clogs amid pails and mops, whisks and brooms, washing away the tracks on the vestibule floor. From time to time she breaks off to blow her nose voluminously and to wipe a tear away with the corner of her blue apron. There is a ring at the house door; Virginia goes to open it, and on the sill appears, bare-headed and bare-footed, the tall and emaciated form of an old man, with scrubby beard and hair, clothed in a soiled, sack-like, faded and much dirtied cowl.*]

Virginia [*opening the door cautiously*]. Well, what is it? God bless us! Another beggar! What are you after?

Saint Antony. Let me in.

Virginia. No, you're too muddy. Stay out there. What do you want?

Saint Antony. To enter.

Virginia. What for?

Saint Antony. To restore Miss Hortensia to life.

Virginia. To restore Miss Hortensia to life? Go along! Who are you?

Saint Antony. Blessed Saint Antony.

Virginia. Of Padua?

Saint Antony. The same. [*His halo glows and brightens.*]

Virginia. Jesus! Jesus! And His Mother Mary! Well! Well! [*She swings the door wide open, falls on her knees and begins to pray rapidly, running through the Angelic Salutation, her hands folded on her broomstick. Then she kisses the hem of the Saint's robe and resumes mechanically and without thinking:*] Blessed Saint Antony, have pity on us! Pray for us, Blessed Saint Antony! . . . Pray for us!

Saint Antony. Let me in and close the door.

Virginia [*getting up crossly*]. Well, wipe your feet there on the mat.

Saint Antony [*obeying her awkwardly*]. She is laid out in there.

Virginia [*bewildered but pleased*]. How did

you know that? Sure enough, she is laid out in the parlor! Oh, sir, the poor old lady! Just turned seventy-seven—that ain't much, is it?—and wasn't she the God-fearing creature; you don't know the savings she laid by . . . And the money owing to her! She was rich, sure enough. She's left a neat two millions behind her. Two millions is a heap of money, ain't it?

Saint Antony. Yes, indeed.

Virginia. And it all goes to her two nephews, Mr. Gus and Mr. Achilles and their children. Mr. Gus gets the house too. And she left a sum to the pastor and to the church and to the sexton and the sacristan and to the poor and to the Vicar and to fourteen Jesuits and to all her domestics, according to how long they was in her service. It's me that gets the most of that: I was 33 years in her service. I'm down for 3,300 francs. That's a handsome sum!

Saint Antony. So it is.

Virginia. She paid me my just wages regular. You can say what you please . . . There ain't many a master would treat you that way, after they're dead. Oh! She was a God-fearing soul! And they're burying her to-day. Everybody has sent flowers. You ought to see the parlor. On the bed, on the table, on the chairs—the arm chairs—the piano—everywhere flowers! And all white, it's so pretty! We don't know where to put all the wreaths. [*There is a ring. She opens the door and comes back*

with two wreaths.] Here are two more. [*She scrutinizes the wreaths and weighs them in her hand.*] They're fine-looking, ain't they? Just hold them a minute till I get through this washing up. [*She gives the wreaths to St. Antony, who takes one in each hand obligingly.*] This afternoon she'll be taken to the cathedral! Everything's got to be in order and I've no more than time.

St. Antony. Lead me to the corpse.

Virginia. Lead you to the corpse? Now?

St. Antony. Yes.

Virginia. No!—no, sir! You'll have to wait awhile; they're still at table.

St. Antony. God has enjoined haste; it is time to restore her to life.

Virginia. You don't mean to raise her up from the dead?

St. Antony. Yes.

Virginia. But she's three days dead; she's stale . . .

St. Antony. Therefore, on the third day, I shall raise her.

Virginia. For her to live again like she used to?

St. Antony. Yes.

Virginia. Then we ain't to inherit nothing?

St. Antony. No.

Virginia. But what'll Mr. Gus say to that?

St. Antony. I don't know.

Virginia. And my three thousand, three hundred francs—now, that's too bad.

St. Antony. Haven't you laid by anything, Virginia?

Virginia. Not a farthing . . . I've a sick sister takes every penny I earn.

St. Antony. Well, if you are afraid you'll lose three thousand francs.

Virginia. Three thousand, three hundred francs!

St. Antony. If you're afraid you'll lose them, I shall not resurrect Miss Hortensia.

Virginia. Couldn't you arrange it so she could live just the same and I needn't lose the money?

St. Antony. No, one thing or the other. I have heard your prayers and returned to earth, Virginia, and now you must choose . . .

Virginia [*after brief reflection*]. Well, then . . . resurrect her. [*The halo glows again.*] What's the matter with you now?

St. Antony. You have made me happy.

Virginia. And when I do that, does your thing, your lantern there, begin to shine?

St. Antony. Yes;—all by itself . . .

Virginia. That's queer. Don't stand so near the curtains; you'll set them on fire.

St. Antony. Don't be afraid, the flame is heavenly. Lead me to the corpse.

Virginia. I told you before, you must wait. I can't be disturbing them now. Can't you see they're all at table?

St. Antony. Who?

Virginia. Why, who do you think? The whole family! Her two nephews, Mr. Gustavus and

Mr. Achilles with his wife and their children and Mr. George and Mr. Alberic and Mr. Alphonse and Mr. Desiré, and our cousins and their ladies, and the Pastor and the Doctor, and I don't know who all besides. Friends and relatives we never see before, and some from way away! They're all rich people!

St. Antony. Well, well.

Virginia. You see the street, coming in, didn't you?

St. Antony. What street?

Virginia. What street? Jesus Christ! Our street! In front of our house.

St. Antony. Yes.

Virginia. A grand street. Well, all the houses on the left side—except the first—you know that little one where the baker lives—they all belong to my mistress. All the houses on the right side of the street belong to Mr. Gus, twenty-two of them in all. That's a neat sum!

St. Antony. Yes, indeed.

Virginia [*pointing to the halo*]. Look, your thing there; your lantern's going out.

St. Antony [*feeling for his halo*]. Yes, I'm afraid.

Virginia. It don't burn very long somehow, does it?

St. Antony. It depends, Virginia, on the thoughts it encounters.

Virginia. Hm! . . . Well, they own woods and farms and houses, too. Mr. Gus has a big

starch factory—"Gustavus's Starch, Ltd."—you heard of it, I'm sure. Yes, it's a mighty good and a mighty rich family. Four independent gentlemen in it as never did a stroke of work! They're all come to the burial, and some from way away. There's one of 'em had to travel two days in the night to be here prompt. I'll show him to you, he's got a beard. They're all at table still. We can't be disturbing them now. I tell you, it's a right big lunch; twenty-four covers. I see the bill of fare: oysters, two soups, three entrées, lobster jelly and trout à la Schubert . . . Do you know what that is?

St. Antony. No.

Virginia. Well, no more do I; it's something good, but not for the likes of you and me. There's no champagne on account of the mourning, but all other kinds of wine. My mistress had the best cellar in town! I'll try to sneak you out a good glass if they leave us anything. Just you wait here, I'll see what they are doing now. [*She goes up the stairs, draws the curtains aside and looks through the glass doors.*] I think it's that trout—that trout à la Schubert! Oh, there's Joseph. He's just taking the pine-apple off. They've a good two hours ahead of them. You'd better sit down. No, no, not on the leather there, you are too dirty; here, on this stool. I must hurry and clean up now . . . [*St. Antony sits down on the stool, Virginia goes back to her work and looks for a pail.*]

Look out, look out. Lift up your feet! I'm pouring the water. No! No! get out of that, you're in my way there! Sit down in that corner! Put the stool up against the wall. [*St. Antony does as he is told.*] There now: you won't get wet. Ain't you hungry?

St. Antony. No, thank you, but I am in a hurry; so go and tell your masters.

Virginia. You're in a hurry? What have you got to do?

St. Antony. A few miracles.

Virginia. Well, I can't be disturbing them at table. We must wait till coffee is served. Mr. Gus might be very angry. I don't know what he'll say to you, sir: he ain't for having poor people come into his house. And you don't look over-prosperous . . .

St. Antony. Saints are never prosperous.

Virginia. But you get a good bit given away to you . . .

St. Antony. Not everything that is given reaches Heaven, Virginia.

Virginia. Don't it? And it's the priests take what we give you, is it? I've heard say that, but I wouldn't have believed it! Jesus Christ!—Listen to me!

St. Antony. Well?

Virginia. Do you see up there behind you—that brass tap?

St. Antony. Yes.

Virginia. Where the water's dribbling out—

there's an empty pail behind you; suppose you was to fill it now.

St. Antony. Certainly.

Virginia. I'll never get this all clean if some one don't lend me a hand. And not a soul helps me; they're all off their heads. When a body dies, it's too much trouble! But I guess I know all about that! Lucky it don't happen every day, ain't it? This ain't what you'd call an easy job. I've still got the copper to shine. Now then, turn off the tap, that's it. And bring me the pail. Ain't your feet cold? Be careful of the wreaths there; lay them on the stool. That's right . . . Over there . . . [*St. Antony brings her the pail.*] Thank you. If you're half as honest as you are obliging. [*There is a sound of voices and of chairs being moved.*] Listen! [*She goes to the glass door.*] They're quarreling! No, they're just eating! Joseph's just helpin' the pastor. The master's coming out. I'll tell him you want to . . . Sh! Put down the pail! Sit down. [*St. Antony obeys and is about to sit down on the stool on which the wreaths are lying.*] Hey, what are you doing? You're sitting on the wreaths.

St. Antony. Oh, I don't see very well!

Virginia. Blockhead! They're a pretty sight now. What'll Mr. Gus say? Well, God be praised! They ain't so bad after all. Sit down over there, hold on to 'em and be quiet as a mouse. [*Kneeling in front of the Saint.*] And

now, sir, I would like to ask you one more thing.

St Antony. Speak; do not be afraid.

Virginia. Could you give me your blessing, sir, now as we're alone? When the company comes in, I'll be sent out of the room; and I won't see you no more. I'm old and may need it.

St. Antony [*rises and blesses her, his halo glowing*]. I bless you, my daughter, for you are good; guileless of heart, open of mind; without fault, without fear; without reticence before the great secrets, and faithful in your small duties. Go in peace, my child, and tell your masters. [*Exit Virginia. St. Antony sits down again on the stool. Presently the glass door opens and Gustavus strides in followed by Virginia.*]

Gustavus [*his voice raised in anger*]. What's the meaning of this? What do you want? Who are you?

St. Antony [*rising discreetly*]. Blessed Saint Antony.

Gustavus. Blessed Saint——

St. Antony. Of Padua.

Gustavus. What kind of a hoax is this? I am not in the mood for laughing. I guess you have had too much to drink. Well, speak up: what are you here for? What do you want?

St. Antony. To revive your aunt.

Gustavus. Revive my—? [*To Virginia.*] He's drunk! Why did you let him in? [*To St. Antony.*] Listen to me, my man, we have no time for fooling; my aunt is to be buried to-day. You

can come back to-morrow. Here! Here are a few farthings.

St. Antony [*gently obstinate*]. I wish to revive her to-day.

Gustavus. All right, all right! after the ceremony. Come on now; here's the door.

St. Antony. I shall not leave until I have revived her.

Gustavus [*flaming out*]. Here, you! I've had enough of this. You're getting tiresome; do you hear? My guests are waiting for me . . . [*He opens the street door.*] Out with you now and quick.

St. Antony. I shall not leave until I have revived . . .

Gustavus. Oh, this is too . . . Well, well, we'll see whether you will or not. [*He opens the glass door and shouts.*] Joseph!

Joseph [*appears on the step, a large steaming platter in his hand*]. Yes, sir.

Gustavus [*with a glance at the dish*]. What's that?

Joseph. The fowl, sir.

Gustavus. Give it to Virginia and kick this vagabond out on the street, do you hear? And promptly.

Joseph [*giving Virginia the dish*]. Certainly, sir. [*Going up to the Saint.*] Come on, old codger, didn't you hear? You're in the wrong house! Come along with you! Get out! . . . You won't? Open the door, Virginia.

Gustavus. I'll open it. [*He opens the street door.*]

Joseph. All right, that's enough; he ain't ridin' out . . . [*Rolling up his sleeves and spitting in his hands.*] So, now, we'll see about you. [*He grasps St. Antony firmly to swing him out, but the Saint stands rooted to the spot. Stupefied.*] Well, what the . . .

Gustavus. What's the matter?

Joseph. I don't know what's happened to him! There 'e stands like 'e was rooted and growing there. 'E won't budge.

Gustavus. I'll help you. [*Both try to push St. Antony out, but he remains immovable. Half-aside:*] Well, on my soul! . . . He's dangerous. . . . Be careful . . . He's got the strength of a Hercules. We had better deal gently with him. Now listen to me, my friend, you understand, don't you, that on such a day, at the burial of my revered aunt . . .

St. Antony. Whom I have come to revive from the dead . . .

Gustavus. But you understand, surely, that this is scarcely the time . . . The fowl will be cold, my guests are waiting, and we are not in the mood for laughing. [*Achilles appears, napkin in hand, on the steps.*]

Achilles. What's the matter, Gus? What's wrong? We're waiting for the fowl.

Gustavus. The fowl! It's this old fool who won't go out . . .

Achilles. Is he drunk?

Gustavus. Of course.

Achilles. Put him out and be done with it. I don't see why our meal should be spoiled for a dirty tramp . . .

Gustavus. He won't go.

Achilles. What's that? Won't go? We'll soon see about that.

Gustavus. Try him yourself.

Achilles. I'm not going to take such a dirty beggar by the throat. It seems to me that's Joseph's business, or—or the coachman's . . .

Gustavus. We've tried, we don't want to scuffle—in here—on such a day. [*Other guests appear at the door, most of them still with their mouths full and their napkins under their arms or around their necks.*]

A Guest. What's it all about?

A Second. What are you doing, Gus?

A Third. What's the beggar want?

A Fourth. Where has he sprung from?

Gustavus. He won't go out. Another blunder of Virginia's. As soon as she catches sight of a beggar, she . . . she loses her head! She let this fool in; he insists on seeing Auntie and reviving her.

A Guest. We must send for the police.

Gustavus. For God's sake, no scene! I don't want the police in this house on a day like this.

Achilles. A moment, Gus.

Gustavus. Well?

Achilles. Have you noticed that two or three tiles are cracked there on the left side, at the end of the corridor?

Gustavus. Yes, I know. I'm going to have a mosaic floor laid in place of those tiles.

Achilles. It'll make it look more friendly.

Gustavus. Yes—one more up to date. And in place of this door and these white curtains I thought of putting in painted window sashes, illustrating THE CHASE, INDUSTRY, and PROGRESS, with a garland of fruits and wild animals!

Achilles. Yes, that would be handsome.

Gustavus. I'm thinking of having my office in there [*pointing to the room right*] and opposite the employees'.

Achilles. When are you moving in?

Gustavus. A few days after the wake. It would scarcely be becoming to move in the very next day.

Achilles. Of course, but meanwhile, we must get rid of this—this unbidden guest.

Gustavus. He acts as if he were quite at home!

Achilles [*to St. Antony, sarcastically*]. Won't you have a chair?

St. Antony [*naïvely*]. Thank you, I am not tired.

Achilles. Let me have a try, I'll get him out . . . [*Approaching the saint with a friendly gesture.*] Well, my friend, won't you tell us who you are?

St. Antony. Blessed Saint Antony.

Achilles. Why, of course, you are! [*To the*

others.] He sticks to that, but he's not vicious. [*He notices the pastor among the guests who have crowded around Saint Antony with sceptical and derisive glances.*] Ah, here's the pastor, he knows you, and wants to pay you his respects. Come on, pastor, saints are your business. I know more about farmers' machines and ploughshares. Here is a messenger from Heaven, pastor, the mighty Saint Antony himself, who would like to speak with you. [*Under his breath to the pastor:*] We want to get him quietly to the door, without letting him notice it; as soon as he is outside, good-bye and God-speed to him!

The Pastor [*unctuously and paternally*]. Mighty Saint Antony, your vassal in all humility bids you welcome to this world, which we praise God you have elected to honor with your presence. What does your Holiness desire?

St. Antony. I wish to revive Miss Hortensia.

The Pastor. Poor lady, poor lady! However, such a miracle would assuredly present no difficulties to the greatest of our saints. The dear deceased had a particular cult for you. I will conduct you to her, if your Holiness will take the trouble to follow me . . . [*He goes to the street door and beckons to St. Antony.*] This way, please.

St. Antony [*pointing to the door right*]. No, that way.

The Pastor. Your Holiness will pardon me if I

seem to contradict you; but on account of the press of mourners the corpse has been removed to the house opposite, which if I may mention it, also forms part of the property of dear deceased.

St. Antony [*pointing to the door right*]. In there, in there.

The Pastor [*more and more unctuous*]. To convince yourself of the contrary, your Holiness has only to follow me a moment onto the street; from there you will see the candles and black hangings . . .

St. Antony [*immovable, pointing to the door on the right*]. There will I enter; there; there.

A Guest. He's got a nerve!

Gustavus. He's going a bit too far, really . . .

A Guest. Suppose we open the door and all of us rush him out . . .

Gustavus. No! no! no scene! He might be nasty. He's not to be fooled with; he's got the strength of a bear. Keep your hands off. Joseph and I are strong men and we couldn't budge him.

Achilles. But who told him the corpse lay in there?

Gustavus. Virginia, of course; she's babbled about as much as it was possible to babble.

Virginia. Me, sir? No, sir! Not me, I was attending to my work. I answered Yes and No, nothing else—Didn't I, Saint Antony? [*St. Antony does not reply.*] Well! Speak up when a body talks to you friendly.

St. Antony. She told me nothing.

Virginia. There now, you see. He's a blessed saint; he knew it all beforehand. I tell you, there's nothing he don't know.

Achilles [*going up to the Saint and clapping him amicably on the shoulder*]. Now, then, young fellow, come on; step along, come, come.

The Guests. He's moving; no, he's not moving!

Achilles. I've an idea.

Gustavus. Well?

Achilles. Where's the Doctor?

A Guest. He's still at table; he's finishing his trout.

Gustavus. Go and call him. [*Some go off to get the doctor.*] You're right, he's a madman; it's the Doctor's business.

The Doctor [*appears with his mouth full, his napkin around his neck*]. What's up? Is he mad? Is he sick? Is he drunk? [*Looking the Saint over.*] A beggar! I can do nothing for him. Well, my friend, what's the matter with you?

St. Antony. I wish to revive Miss Hortensia.

The Doctor. I see you're not a medical man. Let me feel your pulse. [*He feels his pulse.*] Do you feel any pain?

St. Antony. No.

The Doctor [*feeling his head and brow*]. And here? Does it hurt when I press?

St. Antony. No.

The Doctor. Good, good. Do you ever suffer from vertigo?

St. Antony. No.

The Doctor. And in your younger days? No serious accidents? No . . . no youthful indiscretions? You understand what I mean? Or constipation? Eh? Well, and your tongue? Let me have a look at that. That's right. Now breathe deep. Deeper, deeper. That's right. What do you want here?

St. Antony. To go in there.

The Doctor. What for?

St. Antony. To revive Miss Hortensia.

The Doctor. She isn't there.

St. Antony. She is there, I see her.

Gustavus. He won't give it up.

Achilles. Couldn't you bleed him?

The Doctor. What for?

Achilles. To put him to sleep. We could easily get him on the street then.

The Doctor. No, no, that would be foolish. He's dangerous.

Achilles. That's the worst of it; he's equal to all of us put together. But, after all, we aren't called upon to put up with vagabonds, and drunkards and fools. Are we?

The Doctor. Do you want my opinion?

Gustavus. Please.

The Doctor. We have to deal with a madman, who can easily become dangerous if we cross him. Furthermore, there is no disrespect intended to the dear deceased. I don't see why

we should not gratify his simple desire and let him into the room for a moment.

Gustavus. Never—as long as I live! What are we coming to if a stranger can force his way into a respectable family on the crazy pretext of reviving a dead woman who never did him any harm?

The Doctor. As you please, it's for you to decide.

Achilles. The Doctor's right.

The Doctor. There's nothing to fear. I hold myself personally responsible; and besides, we are all here and can go in with him.

Gustavus. Well, as far as I am concerned, put an end to the matter. But don't let anybody talk about this ridiculous incident, will you?

Achilles. Auntie's jewels are on the chimney, Gus.

Gustavus. I know. I'll keep an eye on them. [*To the Saint.*] Well, then, come on, this way. We haven't finished lunch yet. So a little lively, please. [*All go into the room on the right, followed by Saint Antony, whose halo suddenly flames out brilliantly.*]

Second Scene

[*A living room. In the rear on a huge canopy bedstead lies the corpse of the maiden lady, Hortensia. Two burning candles, some branches of box-wood, etc. Left, a door. Right, a glass door leading to the garden. All the characters*

of the first episode troop through the door (left) into the room, followed by Saint Antony, to whom Gustavus shows the corpse.]

Gustavus. Now, are you satisfied? Here lies the dear departed, quite dead, you see. And now I think we are entitled to be left alone. [*To Virginia.*] Lead the gentleman out by the garden door.

St. Antony. One moment. [*He walks into the middle of the room and standing at the foot of the bed, turns towards the corpse and speaks in a strong, grave voice.*] Arise!

Gustavus. There, there, that's enough. We can't stand by and have a stranger offend our most sacred feelings.

St. Antony. Be quiet. [*He goes nearer the bed and raises his voice more commandingly.*] Arise!

Gustavus [*losing patience*]. Now, that's enough. Here's the door.

St. Antony [*in a deeper and yet more commanding voice*]. Hortensia, return and arise from the dead! [*To the consternation of all present the dead woman stirs slightly, half opens her eyes, spreads her folded hands, slowly sits up in bed, sets her cap straight on her head, and looks around her, vexed and reluctant; she then proceeds quietly to scratch off a spot of candle grease which she discovers on the arm of her night dress. For a moment an oppressive silence reigns, then Virginia leaves the speechless group*

about her, hurries to the bed and throws herself into the arms of the resurrected woman.]

Virginia. Miss Hortensia! She's alive! Just look at her: she's scratching away a grease spot, she is looking for her glasses! Saint Antony! Saint Antony! A miracle! A miracle! Kneel down! Kneel down!

Gustavus. Keep still, don't talk. This is not the time for . . .

Achilles. There is no doubt about it, she's alive.

A Guest. It isn't possible. What has he done to her?

Gustavus. You can't take it seriously. She'll relapse immediately.

Achilles. Just see how she stares at us.

Gustavus. I don't believe it yet. What kind of a world do we live in? Where are the laws of nature? Doctor, what do you say to this?

The Doctor [*embarrassed*]. What do I say? Why, I say . . . I say . . . that it's none of my business—it's quite outside my field: quite absurd—and quite simple! She lives: ergo, she was never dead. That's no reason for throwing up your hands and crying, A Miracle!

Gustavus. But didn't you say——

The Doctor. What did I say? I beg you to recall that I asserted nothing, absolutely nothing; I beg you to recall that I never even certified her death, did I? I even had very grave doubts—though I did not see fit to impart them to you at the time—for fear of raising false hopes. Be-

sides, it is not probable that she will survive this long.

Achilles. Meanwhile, though, we must accept the evidence of our senses, the blessed evidence of our senses!

Virginia. There ain't no doubt! I told you he's a Saint, a big Saint . . . Just look, she's alive! And as fresh as a rose!

Gustavus [*goes to the bed and embraces the resurrected woman*]. Aunt, my dear aunt, is it really you?

Achilles [*also approaching the bed*]. Do you know me, dear aunt? I am Achilles, your nephew.

An Old Lady. And me, auntie? I am your niece, Leontine.

A Young Girl. And me, godmother? I am your little Valentine to whom you left all your silver . . .

Gustavus. She smiles! . . . She recognizes us all.

Achilles [*seeing the old lady open her mouth and move her lips*]. Listen! She is trying to speak.

Virginia. Heavenly Father! And she has seen God Almighty! She'll tell us all about the marvels of Paradise! Kneel—kneel down!

Achilles. Listen! Listen!

Hortensia [*who has been eyeing St. Antony with scorn and disgust, now speaks sharply*]. What sort of a creature is that? Who has so far forgotten himself as to introduce into my apartment such a barefoot scamp? He'll ruin the

carpets! Put him out at once! Virginia, haven't I told you you're not to let beggars . . .

St. Antony [*raising his hand commandingly*]. Silence. [*The woman stops short and sits open-mouthed, unable to utter a sound.*]

Gustavus. You must forgive her, she doesn't yet realize what she owes to you; but we—ah! we realize what we owe you! What you have accomplished to-day is something, I venture to say, which no one else in this room would—or rather could—accomplish! Whether it was an accident or—something higher—who can say? For my part, I will not presume to judge, but this much I will say: I am proud and happy to clasp your hand, sir.

St. Antony. I wish to leave now, I have other work to do.

Gustavus. Oh, don't be in such a hurry! We can't let you go empty-handed! I don't know what my aunt will want to give you—that's her business, but as far as I am concerned, I shall take the matter up with my brother-in-law, and whatever he may decide—accident or miracle—we'll pay—yes, sir, we'll pay, and no words wasted either! Yes, sir: you shan't regret what you have done. Eh, Achilles?

Achilles. Why, certainly! He shan't regret what he has done.

Gustavus. Well, we ain't very wealthy, of course; we've got children, and our . . . our expectations have all vanished now; but we'll prove our

gratitude. The honor of the family demands it. We couldn't let it be said that a beggar, a stranger did us a—a peculiar service, and departed unrecompensed—eh? Of course, the reward will have to be in proportion to our means, which as I say are now sadly shrunken; but as far as in us lies, we will pay—pay for a good deed! To be sure, there are some services that can not be bought—which indeed one should not attempt to pay for. But . . . Don't interrupt me . . . That's no reason for doing nothing at all. So now, tell us what you would like . . . hm . . .

Achilles. I propose we take up a little collection, not by way of settlement, but——

St. Antony. I wish to leave. I have other work to do.

Gustavus. Other work to do! It ain't polite. Now, listen to me, if you don't want to take anything—and I appreciate the delicacy of your feelings and bow to them—at least you will give us the pleasure, won't you, of accepting some small souvenir? A cigar-holder, say, or a stud-pin, or a meerschaum pipe. I can have your name, address, and date of birth engraved on it.

St. Antony. I can accept nothing.

Gustavus. You mean that?

St. Antony. Yes.

Achilles [*taking out his cigar case*]. Well, at least you'll do us the honor of smoking a cigar with us?

St. Antony. Thank you, I don't smoke.

Achilles. Wait, I've an idea. Since the gentleman won't accept anything—and, like my brother, I appreciate and applaud his delicacy of feeling, as I am sure we all do—for life is a treasure that can't be bought—well, then, since he has shown himself so disinterested, perhaps he will do us the honor of lunching with us, of finishing the meal he has so auspiciously interrupted? What do you say? [*Loud murmurs of assent.*]

Gustavus. Yes, by all means! Come on, we are a sociable crowd: we haven't any pride or airs about us, you see . . .

St. Antony. I am awaited elsewhere.

Gustavus. Oh, come, you can't refuse us this! And who can be awaiting you anyway?

St. Antony. Another corpse.

Gustavus. Another corpse! Nothing but corpses . . . Well, I must say, I hope you don't prefer the dead to us.

Achilles. I know what it is . . . You would rather eat downstairs in the kitchen, wouldn't you? You'd feel more at home there.

Gustavus. Then he can come upstairs for coffee.

Achilles. Yes, yes. Ha! Ha! That's more to his taste. Virginia, leave your mistress a moment; she doesn't need you now; take this gentleman downstairs and do him "the honors of your realm"! Ha! Ha! I guess Virginia and you won't go to sleep together! [*He slaps the saint familiarly on the belly.*] Ha, ha! You

old hypocrite, I see through you! So run along . . . You old swindler, you damned old swindler!

Virginia [*alarmed*]. But, master!

Gustavus. What's wrong?

Virginia. I don't know; Miss Hortensia ain't free to speak no more.

Gustavus. What?

Virginia. No, sir, just take a look at her yourself, please, sir. She's got her mouth wide open, and moves her lips, and works her hands, but it's like her voice was gone.

Gustavus. Dear Aunt, what's the matter? Is there something you want to say to us? [*She nods.*] And you can't? Now, now, just make an effort, it's a little stiffness, that's all. It will soon pass. [*She makes a sign that she can no longer speak.*] What's the matter with you? What do you want? [*To St. Antony.*] What's the meaning of this?

St. Antony. She will speak no more.

Gustavus. She will speak no more? But . . . but . . . she spoke just now. You heard her . . . She was rude to you.

St. Antony. She will speak no more.

Gustavus. Can't you give her back her voice?

St. Antony. No.

Gustavus. But when will her voice come back?

St. Antony. Never again.

Gustavus. She'll be dumb till the day of her death?

St. Antony. Yes.

Gustavus. Why?

St. Antony. She has beheld secrets she may not reveal.

Gustavus. Secrets? What secrets?

St. Antony. In the world of the dead.

Gustavus. In the world of the dead? This is going too far. She spoke, we heard her, we have witnesses. You've deprived her of speech with a purpose which I now begin to see through. You have betrayed our confidence.

Achilles. Yes, our confidence; you're absolutely irresponsible.

Gustavus. Who asked you to come here anyway? It's a hard thing to say, but I'd rather see her dead than in this condition. This is too terrible, too painful for us who love her.

The Doctor. Allow me a word. Be quiet, please. [*Going up to the Saint.*] Let me have a look at your eyes, my friend . . . Just what I thought . . . I knew what I had to expect . . . You see, she never was dead. There is nothing supernatural or mysterious about this. The fellow is simply gifted with a rather extraordinary nervous force. He came just at the right moment.

Gustavus. But what are we going to do now?

The Doctor. Send for the police. He's dangerous.

Gustavus. That's what he deserves . . . [*Shouting.*] Joseph!

Joseph. Yes, sir?

Gustavus. Run to the station and fetch a couple of officers. Tell them to bring handcuffs.

Joseph. Yes, sir. [*He runs out.*]

St. Antony. I ask your permission to withdraw.

Gustavus. All right, you old rascal. Your time's up. You will be able to withdraw in a very few minutes, and in first rate company, too, just wait and see.

Achilles. And one more bit of advice . . . These gentlemen who are about to honor you with their company—talk to them of farming and stock—of stock and horseflesh! Let your trade be stock farming: that's the way to get along with them . . . Here they are. [*Joseph comes back accompanied by two officers and a police sergeant.*]

The Sergeant [*pointing to St. Antony*]. Is that the offender?

Gustavus. That's the man.

Sergeant [*laying his hand on St. Antony*]. Your papers.

St. Antony. What papers?

Sergeant. You haven't none? I knew it. What's your name?

St. Antony. Blessed Saint Antony.

Sergeant. Saint Antony? What do you take me for? That's no Christian name. I want the other, your real one.

St. Antony. I have no other.

Sergeant. Where did you steal this garment?

St. Antony. I didn't steal it. It's my own.

Sergeant. Where were you born?

St. Antony. In Padua.

Sergeant. In Padua? Where's that? What province?

Gustavus. It's in Italy, Sergeant.

Sergeant. I know, I know, but I want him to tell me. So you're an Italian! Just what I thought. Where do you hail from?

St. Antony. From Paradise.

Sergeant. From Paradise? And what sort of a reformatory is that?

St. Antony. It is the abode to which the souls of the departed in the bosom of their Maker turn . . .

Sergeant. What has he done? . . . Stolen?

Gustavus. I shouldn't like to say whether he has stolen or not. I haven't had time yet to see, and I don't believe in offhand accusations; but what he has done is, in my opinion, far worse.

Sergeant. Of course . . . of course!

Gustavus. You know what an affliction we are laboring under, Sergeant. Apparently, he reckoned on the upset condition of the household and our grief to get a good haul. He had probably learned from an accomplice that the jewels and the silver of our dead aunt had been laid out on the chimney. Well, unluckily for him, our aunt was not dead. When she saw this suspicious-looking person in her room, she came to and began to scream for help; whereupon in re-

venge for his failure he deprives her of speech, and in spite of our pleading refuses to restore it to her,—naturally in the hope of being able to bring us to terms! I beg you to notice that I am not lodging a complaint, I am merely stating the facts of the case. Besides, you can ask the Doctor here.

The Doctor. I will give the required information in the presence of the Police Lieutenant. If you wish I will draw up a report.

Achilles. He is either a malefactor or a madman, or both; in any case a dangerous individual who ought to be kept under lock and key.

Sergeant. Of course. Rabutteau!

The Officer. Yes, sir.

Sergeant. The handcuffs.

Gustavus. And now, gentlemen, after all this trouble, won't you do us the honor of drinking a glass of wine with us before you go?

Sergeant. My word, we won't say No to that, eh, Rabutteau, particularly as our charge here don't look very sociable inclined.

Gustavus. Joseph, a bottle of wine, and glasses. [*Exit Joseph.*] We will drink to the recovery of my aunt.

Sergeant. Not a bad idea—in such weather!

Gustavus. Is it still raining?

Sergeant. A regular flood, sir! I just stepped across the street, and look at this cloak! [*Joseph returns with a tray and passes glasses to the assembled company.*]

Sergeant [*raising his glass*]. Ladies and gentlemen, your health!

Gustavus. Your health, Sergeant. [*All touch glasses with the officers.*] Won't you have another?

Sergeant. I'm ready enough, I guess. [*Licking his lips.*] It's a good wine, sir.

St. Antony. I am thirsty, I would like a glass of water.

Sergeant [*scornfully*]. A glass of water! Ha, but hark to the storm outside! You'll get plenty of water in a minute. Just wait, young man, till we get you out—you'll get your mouth full. Well, come on, we've delayed long enough. [*The street bell rings.*]

Gustavus. There's a ring. [*Joseph goes out to open the door.*] How late is it? It's probably the after-dinner guests.

Achilles. Not yet . . . It's only three o'clock. [*The Police Lieutenant strides in.*] Here comes the Police Lieutenant, Mitou.

Lieutenant. Good day, ladies and gentlemen. I've heard all about it. [*Looking at St. Antony.*] Yes, I suspected as much, it is St. Antony himself . . . the great St. Antony of Padua.

Gustavus. You know him then?

Lieutenant. I should say I do: We've turned him out of the hospital three times. You understand, he's a little [*he points to his forehead*] and each time he's turned out, he plays the same pranks, heals the sick, makes the halt whole,

steals the doctors' work and all without a license! [*He goes up to the Saint and looks him over carefully.*] Yes, he's the man. Or at least, well, he's changed since his last escapade. But if it ain't he, it's his twin. I don't know, there's something about him don't seem to me quite right, but we'll see about that in court. Come on, I've got no time to waste. March, my man, march.

Gustavus. Take him out this way through the garden, it won't attract so much attention. [*The door to the garden is opened. Snow, wind, and rain drive into the room.*]

Achilles. Devilish weather! [*St. Antony is led to the door.*]

Virginia [*hurrying forward*]. But, master, the poor man . . . Look! He's barefooted!

Gustavus. Well, what of it? Are we to get him a carriage or a holy shrine?

Virginia. No, I'll lend him my sabots. Take them, Blessed Antony, I've got others.

St. Antony [*putting on the sabots*]. Thank you. [*His halo begins to glow.*]

Virginia. And aren't you wearing anything on your head? You'll catch cold.

St. Antony. I have nothing.

Virginia. Take my little handkerchief. I'll get you my umbrella. [*She hurries out.*]

Achilles. The old fool . . .

Gustavus. That's all right, but meanwhile there's a devil of a draught coming in.

Virginia [*returns with a huge umbrella which she gives St. Anthony*]. Here's my umbrella.

St. Antony [*showing his hands*]. They have bound my hands.

Virginia. I'll go with you! [*She opens the umbrella and holds it over St. Antony, who goes out between the two officers. The halo glows under the umbrella and the group disappears through the garden in the snow.*]

Gustavus [*closing the door*]. At last.

Achilles. What a rascal.

Gustavus [*going to the bed*]. Well, Aunt?

Achilles. What's the matter with her? She is failing.

The Doctor [*hurrying up*]. I don't know. I believe . . .

Gustavus [*bending over the bed*]. Aunt! Aunt! How are you?

The Doctor. This time she is really dying. I told you so.

Gustavus. Impossible.

Achilles. But, Doctor, is there nothing we can do?

The Doctor. Nothing—unfortunately! [*Silence. All gather around the bed.*]

Gustavus [*the first to recover*]. What a day!

Achilles. Listen! Did you ever hear such a storm?

Gustavus. Well, now, you know, we were a bit hard on the poor beggar! When you come to think of it, he really didn't do us any harm . . .

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE

PERSONS

ARKËL, King of Allemonde.
GENEVIEVE, Mother of Pelleas and Golaud.
PELLEAS, GOLAUD, } Grandsons of Arkël.
MELISANDE.
LITTLE YNIOLD, Son of Golaud by a previous marriage.
A DOCTOR.
THE DOOR-KEEPER.
MAID-SERVANTS, BEGGARS, ETC.

PELLEAS AND MELISANDE

ACT I

SCENE I. *The Castle Door*

The Maid-servants [*within*]. Open the door! Open the door!

The Door-keeper [*within*]. Who is there? Why have you come and waked me? Out by the little doors, out by the little doors; there are enough of them! . . .

A Servant [*within*]. We have come to wash the door-stone, the door and the steps; open! open!

Another Servant [*within*]. There are to be great doings!

Third Servant [*within*]. There are to be great merry-makings! Open quickly! . . .

All the Servants. Open! open!

The Door-keeper. Wait! wait! I don't know that I shall be able to open the door . . . It never is opened . . . Wait until daylight comes . . .

First Servant. It is light enough outside; I can see the sun through the chinks . . .

The Door-keeper. Here are the big keys . . . Oh! oh! how they grate, the bolts and the locks! . . . Help me! help me!

All the Servants. We are pulling, we are pulling . . .

Second Servant. It will not open . . .

First Servant. Ah! ah! It is opening! It is opening slowly!

The Door-keeper. How it creaks! It will wake the whole house . . .

Second Servant [*appearing on the threshold*]. Oh! how light it is already out of doors!

First Servant. The sun is rising on the sea!

The Door-keeper. It is open . . . It is wide open! . . . [*All the Maid-servants appear on the threshold, which they cross.*]

First Servant. I shall begin by washing the door-stone.

Second Servant. We shall never be able to clean all this.

Other Servants. Bring water! bring water!

The Door-keeper. Yes, yes; pour water, pour water, pour out all the waters of the flood; you will never be able to do it . . .

Scene II. *A Forest*

[*Melisande is discovered beside a spring. Enter Golaud.*]

Golaud. I shall never find my way out of the forest again. Heaven knows where that beast

has led me. I thought I had wounded it to death; and here are traces of blood. Yet now I have lost sight of it; I think I am lost myself—and my dogs cannot find me. I shall retrace my steps . . .—I think I hear some one crying . . . Oh! oh! what is that at the water's edge? . . . A little maid weeping at the water's edge? [*He coughs.*] She seems not to hear me. I cannot see her face. [*He draws nearer and touches Melisande on the shoulder.*] Why are you crying? [*Melisande starts and prepares to run away.*] Fear nothing. You have nothing to fear. Why are you crying here, all alone?

Melisande. Do not touch me! do not touch me!

Golaud. Fear nothing . . . I shall not do you . . . Oh! you are beautiful!

Melisande. Do not touch me! do not touch me! or I shall throw myself into the water! . . .

Golaud. I am not touching you . . . See, I shall stand here, right against the tree. You must not be afraid. Has some one hurt you?

Melisande. Oh! yes! yes! yes! [*She sobs profoundly.*]

Golaud. Who was it that hurt you?

Melisande. All of them! all of them!

Golaud. How did they hurt you?

Melisande. I will not tell! I cannot tell!

Golaud. Come; you must not cry so. Where have you come from?

Melisande. I ran away! I ran away!

Golaud. Yes; but from where did you run away?

Melisande. I am lost! . . . lost! . . . Oh! lost here . . . I don't belong here . . . I was not born there . . .

Golaud. Where do you come from? Where were you born?

Melisande. Oh! oh! far from here . . . far . . . far . . .

Golaud. What is it that shines so at the bottom of the water?

Melisande. Where?—Ah! that is the crown he gave me. It fell in crying . . .

Golaud. A crown?—Who gave you a crown?—I will try to reach it . . .

Melisande. No, no; I don't want it! I don't want it! . . . I had sooner die . . . die at once . . .

Golaud. I could easily take it out. The water is not very deep.

Melisande. I don't want it! If you take it out, I shall throw myself in instead! . . .

Golaud. No, no; I shall leave it there. It could be reached without trouble, however. It seems to be a very fine crown.—Is it long since you ran away?

Melisande. Yes, yes . . . Who are you?

Golaud. I am the Prince Golaud—grandson of Arkël, the old King of Allemonde . . .

Melisande. Oh! you have got grey hairs already . . .

Golaud. Yes; a few, here, at the temples . . .

Melisande. And your beard too . . . Why are you looking at me in that way?

Golaud. I am looking at your eyes. Do you never close your eyes?

Melisande. Yes, yes; I close them at night . . .

Golaud. Why do you look so astonished?

Melisande. Are you a giant?

Golaud. I am a man like other men . . .

Melisande. Why did you come here?

Golaud. I don't know myself. I was hunting in the forest. I was pursuing a boar. I missed my way.—You look very young. How old are you?

Melisande. I am beginning to feel cold . . .

Golaud. Will you come with me?

Melisande. No, no; I shall stay here . .

Golaud. You cannot stay here all alone. You cannot stay here all night . . . What is your name?

Melisande. Melisande.

Golaud. You will be afraid, all alone. One cannot tell what there may be here . . . all night . . . all alone . . . it is not possible. Melisande, come, give me your hand . . .

Melisande. Oh! do not touch me! . . .

Golaud. You must not cry out . . . I shall not touch you again. Only come with me. The night will be very dark and very cold. Come with me . . .

Melisande. Which way are you going?

Golaud. I don't know . . . I too am lost . . . [*Exeunt.*]

Scene III. *A Hall in the Castle*

[*Arkël and Genevieve are discovered.*]

Genevieve. This is what he writes to his brother Pelleas:—"One evening, I found her all in tears beside a spring, in the forest where I had lost my way. I neither know her age, nor who she is, nor whence she comes, and I dare not question her, for she must have had some great fright; and whenever she is asked what happened, she bursts out crying like a child, and sobs so profoundly that one is afraid. Just as I came upon her beside the spring, a golden crown had slipped from her hair and had fallen into the depths of the water. She was, moreover, dressed like a princess, although her garments had been torn in the briars. It is now six months since I married her, and I know no more than on the day of our meeting. Meantime, my dear Pelleas, you whom I love more than a brother, although we were not born of the same father; meantime, prepare my return . . . I know that my mother will gladly forgive me. But I fear the king, our venerable grandfather; I fear Arkël, in spite of all his kindness, for I have disappointed by this strange marriage, all his political schemes, and I fear that Melisande's beauty, in his wise eyes, will not excuse my folly. If he consent, however, to welcome her as he would welcome his own

daughter, on the third evening after the receipt of this letter, light a lamp at the top of the tower overlooking the sea. I shall perceive it from the deck of our ship; if not, I shall go further, and never return . . ." What do you say to this?

Arkël. Nothing. He has done what he probably had to do. I am very old, and yet I have never for one instant seen clearly within myself; how then would you have me judge the deeds of others? I am not far from the grave, and I am incapable of judging myself . . . One is always mistaken unless one shuts one's eyes. What he has done may seem strange to us; and that is all. He is more than ripe in years, and he has married himself, as a boy might do, to a little girl whom he found by a spring . . . This may appear strange to us, because we can only see the wrong side of destinies . . . the wrong side even of our own . . . He has always followed my advice hitherto; I thought to make him happy in sending him to ask for the Princess Ursula's hand . . . He never could bear solitude, and since his wife's death he had grieved to be alone; this marriage would have put an end to long wars and to ancient enmities . . . He has not willed it so. Let it be as he has willed. I have never put myself in the way of a destiny; and he knows his own future better than I do. There is no such thing, perhaps, as the occurrence of purposeless events . . .

Genevieve. He has always been so prudent, so grave, and so firm . . . If it were Pelleas I should understand . . . But he . . . at his age . . . Whom is he going to bring into our midst? A stranger picked up by the road-side . . . Since his wife's death he lived but for his son, little Yniold, and if he was about to remarry, it was because you had wished it . . . And now . . . a little girl in the forest . . . He has forgotten all . . . What are we to do? [*Enter Pelleas.*]

Arkël. Who is that coming in?

Genevieve. It is Pelleas. He has been crying.

Arkël. Is that you, Pelleas? Come a little nearer, that I may see you in the light . . .

Pelleas. Grandfather, I received another letter at the same time as my brother's; a letter from my friend Marcellus. He is dying, and he calls for me. He wishes to see me before he dies . . .

Arkël. You wish to leave before your brother's return?—Your friend is perhaps less ill than he supposes . . .

Pelleas. His letter is so sad that death is visible between the lines . . . He says that he knows precisely the day that death must come . . . He says that I can outstrip it if I will, but that there is no time to lose. The journey is very long, and if I await Golaud's return it may be too late . . .

Arkël. It would be well to wait awhile, nevertheless. We cannot tell what this homecoming pre-

pares for us. And besides is not your father here, overhead, more dangerously ill, perhaps, than your friend . . . Are you able to choose between father and friend . . . ? [*Exit.*]

Genevieve. Be sure to light the lamp this very evening, Pelleas . . . [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE IV. *Before the Castle*

[*Enter Genevieve and Melisande.*]

Melisande. It is dusky in the gardens. And what big forests, what big forests all around round the palace! . . .

Genevieve. Yes; it astonished me too when I first came here, and it astonishes everybody. There are places where one never sees the sun. But one so soon becomes accustomed to it all . . . It is long ago, it is long ago . . . It is nearly forty years since I came to live here . . . Look the other way, you will have the light of the sea . . .

Melisande. I hear a noise below . . .

Genevieve. Yes; some one is coming up towards us . . . Ah! it is Pelleas . . . he still seems weary of having waited for you so long . . .

Melisande. He has not seen us yet.

Genevieve. I think he has seen us, but he does not quite know what to do . . . Pelleas, Pelleas, is that you?

Pelleas. Yes! . . . I was coming towards the sea . . .

Genevieve. So were we; we were in search of brightness. Here it is a little brighter than elsewhere; and yet the sea is gloomy.

Pelleas. We shall have a storm to-night. There has been one every night for some time, and yet how calm it is now . . . One might put forth in ignorance, never to return.

Melisande. Something is leaving the harbour . . .

Pelleas. It must be a big ship . . . Her lights are very high, we shall see her presently when she sails into that band of light . . .

Genevieve. I don't know that we shall be able to see her . . . there is still a mist on the sea . . .

Pelleas. It seems as if the mist were slowly rising . . .

Melisande. Yes; I see a little light over there that I did not see before . . .

Pelleas. It is a beacon; there are others that we cannot yet see.

Melisande. The ship is in the light . . . She is already far away . . .

Pelleas. It is a foreign ship. She seems to me larger than any of ours . . .

Melisande. It is the ship that brought me here! . . .

Pelleas. She is going at full sail . . .

Melisande. It is the ship that brought me here. She has big sails . . . I know her by her sails . . .

Pelleas. She will have a bad sea to-night . . .

Melisande. Why is she leaving to-night? . . . One can hardly see her now . . . She will be wrecked perhaps . . .

Pelleas. Night is falling very fast . . . [*Silence.*]

Genevieve. Is no one going to speak any more? . . . Have you nothing more to say to one another? . . . It is time to go in. Pelleas, show the way to Melisande. I must go and see little Yniold a moment. [*Exit.*]

Pelleas. There is nothing to be seen now on the sea . . .

Melisande. I see other lights.

Pelleas. Those are the other beacons . . . Do you hear the sea? . . . It is the wind rising . . . Let us go down this way. Will you give me your hand?

Melisande. You see, my hands are full . . .

Pelleas. I will hold you by the arm, the path is steep, and it is very dark . . . I am perhaps going away to-morrow . . .

Melisande. Oh! . . . Why are you going? [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I. *A Spring in the Park*

[*Enter Pelleas and Melisande.*]

Pelleas. You don't know where I have brought you? I often come and sit here towards noon, when it is too hot in the gardens. The air is stifling to-day, even in the shadow of the trees.

Melisande. Oh! the water is clear . . .

Pelleas. And cool as winter. It is an old deserted spring. It was once, they say, a miraculous spring,—it opened the eyes of the blind,—it is still called "blindman's well."

Melisande. Does it open the eyes of the blind no more?

Pelleas. Now that the king himself is nearly blind, no one comes to it . . .

Melisande. How lonely it is here! . . . There is no sound to be heard.

Pelleas. There is always a marvellous silence . . . One seems to hear the water sleep . . . Would you like to sit down on the edge of the marble basin? There is a lime-tree which the sun never pierces . . .

Melisande. I am going to lie down on the marble. —I should like to see the bottom of the water . . .

Pelleas. It has never yet been seen. It is perhaps as deep as the sea. No one knows whence this water comes. Perhaps from the depths of the earth . . .

Melisande. If something were shining down at the bottom, one might see it perhaps . . .

Pelleas. Do not lean so far over . . .

Melisande. I want to touch the water . . .

Pelleas. Take care not to slip . . . I will hold you by the hand . . .

Melisande. No, no, I want to dip both hands in . . . it seems as if my hands were ill to-day . . .

Pelleas. Oh! oh! take care! take care! Melisande! . . . Melisande! . . . ——Oh! your hair! . . .

Melisande [*drawing herself up*]. I cannot, I cannot reach it . . .

Pelleas. Your hair dipped into the water . . .

Melisande. Yes, yes; it is longer than my arms . . . It is longer than myself . . . [*Silence.*]

Pelleas. It was also beside a spring that he found you?

Melisande. Yes . . .

Pelleas. What did he say to you?

Melisande. Nothing;—I don't remember . . .

Pelleas. Was he quite close to you?

Melisande. Yes; he wanted to kiss me.

Pelleas. And you would not?

Melisande. No.

Pelleas. Why not?

Melisande. Oh! oh! I have seen something pass at the bottom of the water . . .

Pelleas. Take care! take care! You will fall in! What are you playing with?

Melisande. With the ring he gave me . . .

Pelleas. Take care; you will lose it . . .

Melisande. No, no; I am sure of my hands . . .

Pelleas. Do not play thus, above such deep water . . .

Melisande. My hands are steady.

Pelleas. How it shines in the sun! Don't throw it up so high towards the sky . . .

Melisande. Oh! . . .

Pelleas. Has it fallen?

Melisande. It has fallen into the water! . . .

Pelleas. Where is it? where is it? . . .

Melisande. I cannot see it go down . . .

Pelleas. I think I see it shine . . .

Melisande. My ring?

Pelleas. Yes, yes; over there . . .

Melisande. Oh! oh! it is so far from us! . . . no, no, that is not it . . . It is lost . . . lost . . . There is nothing left but a big circle on the water . . . What shall we do? What shall we do now? . . .

Pelleas. You must not be so uneasy about a ring. Never mind . . . we shall perhaps find it again. Or else we shall find another . . .

Melisande. No, no; we shall never find it again, nor shall we ever find another . . . I thought I held it in my hands though . . . I had already

closed my hands, and it fell in spite of all . . . I threw it too high, towards the sun . . .

Pelleas. Come, come, we can return another day . . . come, it is time. They might be coming to meet us. It was striking noon when the ring fell.

Melisande. What shall we tell Golaud if he asks where it is?

Pelleas. The truth, the truth, the truth . . . [*Exeunt.*]

Scene II. *A Room in the Castle*

[*Golaud is discovered lying on his bed; Melisande is at the bedside.*]

Golaud. Ah! ah! all is going well, it will be no grave matter. But I cannot explain how it came about. I was hunting quietly in the forest. My horse bolted all of a sudden, for no reason. Had he seen anything unusual? . . . I had just counted the twelve strokes of noon. At the twelfth stroke, he suddenly took fright and ran like one blind and mad, against a tree. I heard nothing more. Nor do I know what happened. I fell, and he must have fallen upon me. I thought the whole forest lay on my chest; I thought my heart was crushed. But my heart is tough. It appears to be no grave matter . . .

Melisande. Would you like to drink a little water?

Golaud. Thank you, thank you; I am not thirsty.

Melisande. Would you like another pillow? . . . There is a little bloodstain on this one.

Golaud. No, no; it is not worth while. I bled at the mouth just now. I shall perhaps do so again . . .

Melisande. Are you quite sure? . . . You are not in too great pain?

Golaud. No, no, I have been through more than this. I am tempered to blood and steel . . . These are not the little bones of a child; you must not be anxious . . .

Melisande. Close your eyes and try to sleep. I shall stay here all night.

Golaud. No, no; I will not have you tire yourself thus. I shall want nothing; I shall sleep like a child . . . What is it, Melisande? Why are you crying all of a sudden? . . .

Melisande [*bursting into tears*]. I am . . . I am ill too.

Golaud. You are ill? . . . What ails you, what ails you, Melisande? . . .

Melisande. I don't know . . . I feel ill here . . . I had rather tell it you to-day; my lord, my lord, I am not happy here . . .

Golaud. Why, what has happened, Melisande? What is the matter? . . . I who had no suspicion . . . Why, what has happened? . . . Has any one done you wrong? . . . Can any one have hurt you?

Melisande. No, no; no one has done me the least

wrong . . . It is not that . . . It is not that . . . But I cannot live here any longer. I don't know why . . . I should like to go away, to go away! . . . I shall die if I am left here . . .

Golaud. But something must have happened? You must be hiding something from me? . . . Tell me the whole truth, Melisande . . . Is it the king? . . . Is it my mother? . . . Is it Pelleas? . . .

Melisande. No, no; it is not Pelleas. It is nobody . . . You cannot understand me . . .

Golaud. Why should I not understand? . . . If you tell me nothing, what would you have me do? . . . Tell me all, and I shall understand all.

Melisande. I don't myself know what it is . . . I don't rightly know what it is . . . If I could tell you, I would . . . It is something that is stronger than myself . . .

Golaud. Come; be reasonable, Melisande.—What would you have me do?—You are no longer a child.—Is it me that you wish to leave?

Melisande. Oh! no, no; it is not that . . . I should like to go away with you . . . It is here that I can no longer live . . . I feel that I shall not live much longer . . .

Golaud. But there must be some reason, nevertheless. They will think you mad. They will credit you with childish dreams.—Come, is it

Pelleas, by any chance?—I think he does not often speak to you . . .

Melisande. Yes, yes; he speaks to me at times. He does not like me, I think; I have seen it in his eyes . . . But he speaks whenever he meets me . . .

Golaud. You must not take it amiss. He has always been so. He is rather strange. And just now he is sad; he is thinking of his friend, Marcellus, who lies at the point of death, and to whom he may not go . . . He will change, he will change, you will see; he is young . . .

Melisande. But it is not that . . . It is not that . . .

Golaud. What is it then?—Can you not accustom yourself to the life we lead here? Is it too dismal for you here?—It is true that the castle is very old and very gloomy . . . very cold and very deep. And all those that live in it are far in years. And the country may seem dismal too with all its ancient lightless forests. But one can make all this more cheerful if one pleases. And then, joy, joy, one cannot touch joy every day; one must take things as they are. Yet tell me of something; no matter what; I will do anything you wish . . .

Melisande. Yes, yes; it is true . . . one never sees the sky here. I saw it for the first time this morning . . .

Golaud. Is that what makes you weep, my poor Melisande?—Is it nothing but that?—You shed

tears because you cannot see the sky?—Come, come, you are no longer of an age when one may allow oneself to cry about such things . . . And then, is summer not here? You will soon see the sky every day.—And then next year . . . Come, give me your hand; give me both your little hands. [*He takes her hands.*] Oh! oh! these little hands that I could crush like flowers . . .—Why, where is the ring I gave you?

Melisande. The ring?

Golaud. Yes; our wedding-ring, where is it?

Melisande. I think . . . I think it fell . . .

Golaud. Fell?—Where did it fall?—You have not lost it?

Melisande. No, no; it fell . . . it must have fallen . . . but I know where it is . . .

Golaud. Where is it?

Melisande. You know . . . you know . . . the cave by the sea? . . .

Golaud. Yes.

Melisande. Well, it was there . . . It must have been there . . . Yes, yes; I remember . . . I went there this morning to pick up shells for little Yniold . . . There are lovely ones there . . . It slipped from my finger . . . then the sea came up; and I had to leave before I could find it.

Golaud. Are you sure it is there?

Melisande. Yes, yes; quite sure . . . I felt it

slip . . . then, all of a sudden, the sound of the waves . . .

Golaud. You must go and fetch it at once.

Melisande. I must go and fetch it at once?

Golaud. Yes.

Melisande. Now?—at once?—in the dark?

Golaud. Now, at once, in the dark. You must go and fetch it at once. I would rather have lost all I possess than have lost that ring. You don't know what it is. You don't know where it comes from. The sea will be very high to-night. The sea will rise and take it before you . . . make haste. You must go and fetch it at once . . .

Melisande. I dare not . . . I dare not go alone . . .

Golaud. Go, go, no matter with whom. But you must go at once, do you hear?—Make haste; ask Pelleas to go with you.

Melisande. Pelleas?—With Pelleas?—But Pelleas will not want to . . .

Golaud. Pelleas will do all that you ask him. I know Pelleas better than you do. Go, go, make haste. I shall not sleep before I have the ring.

Melisande. Oh! oh! I am not happy! . . . I am not happy! . . . [*Exit weeping.*]

Scene III. *Before a Cave*

[*Enter Pelleas and Melisande.*]

Pelleas [*speaking in great agitation*]. Yes, this is the spot; we have reached it. It is so dark that the entrance of the cave is indistinguishable from the rest of night . . . There are no stars that way. Let us wait until the moon has rent that great cloud; it will illumine the whole cave, and then we shall be able to enter without danger. There are some dangerous points, and the path is very narrow, between two lakes which have never yet been sounded. I did not think to bring a torch or a lantern, but I fancy that the light of the sky will suffice.—You have never yet ventured into this cave?

Melisande. No.

Pelleas. Come in, come . . . You must be able to describe the spot where you lost the ring, in case he questions you . . . It is a very large cave and very beautiful. There are stalactites that resemble plants and men. It is full of blue shades. It has never been explored to the very end. There are, it seems, great treasures hidden there. You will see the remains of ancient shipwrecks. But one must not attempt to go far without a guide. There have been some that never came back. I myself do not dare go too far in. We will stop the moment we no

longer see the light of the waves or of the sky. If one lights a little light in there it seems as if the roof were covered with stars, like the sky. They say it is because there are fragments of crystal and salt that shine in the rock.—Look, look, I think the sky is going to clear . . . Give me your hand; don't tremble, don't tremble so. There is no danger; we will stop the moment we can no longer perceive the light of the sea . . . Is it the sound of the cave that frightens you? It is the sound of night, the sound of silence . . . Do you hear the sea behind us?—It does not seem happy to-night . . . Ah! here is light! . . . [*The moon broadly illumines the entrance and a part of the cave; one beholds, at a certain depth, three white-haired old beggars, seated side by side, and supporting one another in sleep, against a ledge of rock.*]

Melisande. Ah!

Pelleas. What is it?

Melisande. There are . . . [*She points to the three beggars.*]

Pelleas. Yes, yes; I too have seen them . . .

Melisande. Let us go! . . . Let us go! . . .

Pelleas. Yes . . . They are three old beggars that have fallen asleep . . . There is a famine in the land . . . Why have they come here to sleep? . . .

Melisande. Let us go! . . . Come, come . . . Let us go! . . .

Pelleas. Take care; don't speak so loud . . . We

must not wake them . . . they are still fast asleep . . . Come.

Melisande. Leave me, leave me; I had rather walk alone . . .

Pelleas. We will come again another day . . . [*Exeunt.*]

Scene IV. *A Room in the Castle*

[*Arkël and Pelleas are discovered.*]

Arkël. You see that everything conspires to hold you here at this moment, and that everything forbids this bootless journey. The truth as to your father's condition has been kept from you hitherto; but it is perhaps hopeless; and that alone should suffice to hold you here. But there are so many other reasons . . . And it is not at a time when our enemies are roused, when our people are dying of hunger and murmuring on all sides, that you have the right to desert us. And why this journey? Marcellus is dead; and life has heavier duties than the visiting of graves. You are weary, you say, of your inactive life; but activity and duty are not to be found by the roadside. One must await them on the threshold, ready to bid them enter at the moment of passing; and they pass every day. You have never seen them? I myself am almost blind, and yet I will teach you to see; I

will show them to you, the day that you wish to beckon them in. Still, listen to me: if you think it is from the depths of your life that this journey is exacted, I shall not forbid you to undertake it; for you must know, better than I, what events you ought to offer to your being and to your destiny. I shall only ask you to wait until we know what is about to happen . . .

Pelleas. How long shall I have to wait?

Arkël. A few weeks; maybe a few days . . .

Pelleas. I will wait . . .

ACT III

SCENE I. *A Room in the Castle*

[*Pelleas and Melisande are discovered. Melisande, with a distaff, is spinning at the further end of the room.*]

Pelleas. Yniold has not come back; where has he gone?

Melisande. He heard something in the passage; he went to see what it was.

Pelleas. Melisande . . .

Melisande. What is it?

Pelleas. . . . Can you still see to work? . . .

Melisande. I work just as well in the dark . . .

Pelleas. I think that every one in the castle is already fast asleep. Golaud has not come home from hunting. It is late, however . . . Does he still suffer from his fall?

Melisande. He has said that he suffers no more.

Pelleas. He ought to be more prudent; his limbs are no longer supple as at twenty . . . I can see stars out of window, and the light of the moon on the trees. It is late; he will not come back now. [*A knock at the door.*] Who is there? . . . Come in! . . . [*Little Yniold opens the door and enters the room.*] Was it

you that knocked so? . . . That is not the way to knock at doors. It was just as if some misfortune had happened; look, you have frightened your little mother.

Little Yniold. I only knocked quite a little.

Pelleas. It is late; father will not be coming home this evening; it is time to go to bed.

Little Yniold. I shall not go to bed before you do.

Pelleas. What? . . . What are you saying there?

Little Yniold. I said . . . not before you . . . not before you . . . [*He bursts into tears and takes refuge beside Melisande.*]

Melisande. What is it, Yniold? . . . What is it? . . . why are you crying all of a sudden?

Yniold [*sobbing*]. Because . . . Oh! oh! because . . .

Melisande. Why? . . . Why? . . . tell me . . .

Yniold. Little mother . . . little mother . . . you are going away . . .

Melisande. Why, what possesses you, Yniold? . . . I have never dreamed of going away . . .

Yniold. Yes, yes; father is gone . . . father has not come back, and now you are going too . . . I have seen it . . . I have seen it . . .

Melisande. But there has been no question of such a thing, Yniold . . . By what could you see that I was going? . . .

Yniold. I saw it . . . I saw it . . . You said things to my uncle that I could not hear . . .

Pelleas. He is sleepy . . . he has been dreaming . . . Come here, Yniold; are you asleep already? . . . Come and look out of window; the swans are fighting the dogs . . .

Yniold [*at the window*]. Oh! oh! They are chasing them, the dogs! . . . They are chasing them! . . . Oh! oh! the water! . . . the wings! . . . the wings! . . . They are frightened . . .

Pelleas [*going back to Melisande*]. He is sleepy; he is struggling against sleep, and his eyes are closing . . .

Melisande [*singing in an undertone as she spins*]:

Saint Daniel and Saint Michael, O! . . .
Saint Michael and Saint Raphael too . . .

Yniold [*at the window*]. Oh! oh! mother dear! . . .

Melisande [*rising abruptly*]. What is it, Yniold? . . . What is it? . . .

Yniold. I have seen something out of the window! . . . [*Pelleas and Melisande run to the window.*]

Pelleas. What is there at the window? . . . What is it that you saw? . . .

Yniold. Oh! oh! I saw something! . . .

Pelleas. But there is nothing. I can see nothing . . .

Melisande. Nor I.

Pelleas. Where did you see something? In what direction? . . .

Yniold. Over there, over there! . . . It has gone now.

Pelleas. He no longer knows what he is saying. He must have seen the moonshine on the forest. There are often strange reflections . . . or else something may have passed along the road . . . or in his sleep. For look, look, I believe he is going to sleep for good . . .

Yniold [*at the window*]. Father is there! father is there!

Pelleas [*going to the window*]. He is right; Golaud has just entered the courtyard.

Yniold. Father dear! . . . father dear! . . . I will go and meet him! . . . [*Exit running.—Silence.*]

Pelleas. They are coming upstairs . . . [*Enter Golaud, and little Yniold bearing a lamp.*]

Golaud. Are you still waiting in the dark?

Yniold. I have brought a light, mother, a big light! [*He lifts up the lamp and looks at Melisande.*] Have you been crying, mother dear? . . . Have you been crying? . . . [*He lifts the lamp towards Pelleas, and looks at him also.*] You too, you too, have you been crying? . . . Father dear, look, father dear; they have been crying, both of them . . .

Golaud. Do not hold the light thus to their eyes . . .

SCENE II. *One of the castle towers. A sentry path runs below one of the tower windows.*

Melisande [*combing her hair at the window*].

Thirty years I've sought, my sisters,
Far his hiding-place,
Thirty years I've walked, my sisters,
But have found no trace . . .

Thirty years I've walked, my sisters,
And my feet are worn,
He was all about, my sisters,
Yet he was unborn . . .

Sad the hour grows, my sisters,
Bare my feet again,
For the evening dies, my sisters,
And my soul's in pain . . .

You are now sixteen, my sisters,
Time it is for you,
Take my staff away, my sisters,
Go and seek him too . . .

[*Enter Pelleas by the sentry path.*]

Pelleas. Hola! Hola! ho! . . .

Melisande. Who is there?

Pelleas. I, I, and I! . . . What are you doing there at the window, singing like a bird that is not of this land?

Melisande. I am doing my hair for the night . . .

Pelleas. Is that what I see on the wall? . . . I thought you had a light by you . . .

Melisande. I opened the window; it is too hot in the tower . . . It is fine to-night . . .

Pelleas. There are innumerable stars: I have never seen so many as to-night . . . but the moon is still on the sea . . . Do not stay in the dark, Melisande, lean over a little, that I may see your hair all loose . . .

Melisande. I am hideous so . . . [*She leans out of window.*]

Pelleas. Oh! oh! Melisande! . . . oh! you are beautiful! . . . you are beautiful so! . . . lean over! . . . lean over! . . . let me come nearer to you . . .

Melisande. I cannot come any nearer to you . . . I am leaning over as far as I can . . .

Pelleas. I cannot climb any higher . . . give me at least your hand this evening . . . before I go away . . . I leave to-morrow . . .

Melisande. No, no, no . . .

Pelleas. Yes, yes, yes; I am going, I am going to-morrow . . . give me your hand, your hand, your little hand to my lips . . .

Melisande. I shall not give you my hand if you go away . . .

Pelleas. Give, give, give . . .

Melisande. Then you will not go?

Pelleas. I will wait, I will wait . . .

Melisande. I see a rose in the dark . . .

Pelleas. Where? . . . I can only see the branches of the willow that rise above the wall . . .

Melisande. Lower, lower in the garden; over there, right in the dusky green . . .

Pelleas. It is not a rose . . . I shall go and look presently, but give me your hand first; first your hand . . .

Melisande. There, there; . . . I cannot bend down any lower . . .

Pelleas. My lips cannot reach your hand . . .

Melisande. I cannot bend down any lower . . . I am on the point of falling . . . Oh! oh! my hair is falling down the tower! . . . [*Her hair turns over suddenly as she bends, and inundates Pelleas.*]

Pelleas. Oh! oh! what is this? . . . Your hair, your hair is coming down to me! . . . All your hair, Melisande, all your hair has fallen down the tower! . . . I hold it in my hands, I hold it in my mouth . . . I hold it in my arms, I wind it about my neck . . . I shall not open my hands again this night . . .

Melisande. Leave me! leave me! . . . You will make me fall! . . .

Pelleas. No, no, no . . . I never saw hair like yours, Melisande! . . . See, see, see; it comes from so high, and yet its floods reach my heart . . . They reach my knees! . . . And it is soft, it is as soft as if it had fallen from heaven! . . . I can no longer see heaven for your hair. Do you see? do you see? . . . My two hands

cannot hold it; there are even some locks on the willow branches . . . They live, like birds, in my hands . . . and they love me, they love me better than you! . . .

Melisande. Leave me, leave me . . . Some one might pass . . .

Pelleas. No, no, no; I shall not release you to-night . . . You are my prisoner for this night; all night, all night . . .

Melisande. Pelleas! Pelleas! . . .

Pelleas. I am tying them, tying them to the branches of the willow . . . you shall never go from here again . . . You shall never go from here again . . . Look, look, I am kissing your hair . . . All pain has left me here in the midst of your hair . . . Do you hear my kisses creep along your hair? . . . They are climbing all the length of your hair . . . Every single hair must bring you one . . . You see, you see, I can open my hands . . . My hands are free, and yet you cannot leave me . . .

Melisande. Oh! oh! you have hurt me . . . [*A flight of doves leave the tower and flutter about them in the night.*]—What has happened, Pelleas?—What is flying here all about me?

Pelleas. The doves are leaving the tower . . . I frightened them; they are flying away . . .

Melisande. They are my doves, Pelleas.—Let us go, leave me; they might never come back . . .

Pelleas. Why should they not come back?

Melisande. They will lose themselves in the dark

. . . Leave me, let me lift up my head . . . I hear the sound of footsteps . . . Leave me!—it is Golaud! . . . I believe it is Golaud! . . . He has heard us . . .

Pelleas. Wait! wait! . . . Your locks are twisted round the branches . . . They caught there in the dark . . . Wait! wait! . . . The night is dark . . . [*Enter Golaud by the sentry path.*]

Golaud. What are you doing here?

Pelleas. What am I doing here? . . . I . . .

Golaud. You are children . . . Melisande, don't lean so far out of the window; you will fall . . . Don't you know that it is late?—It is close upon midnight.—Don't play thus in the dark. You are children . . . [*Laughing nervously.*] What children! . . . What children! . . . [*Exit, with Pelleas.*]

Scene III. *The Castle Vaults*

[*Enter Golaud and Pelleas.*]

Golaud. Take care; this way.—Have you never ventured down into these vaults?

Pelleas. Yes, once; but it was long ago . . .

Golaud. They are prodigiously large; a series of enormous caves that lead, heaven knows where. The whole castle is built above these caves. Do you smell what a deathly odour reigns here? —That is what I wanted to show you. I have

an idea that it rises from the little underground lake you will see presently. Take care; walk before me, in the rays of my lantern. I will tell you when we are there. [*They continue to walk in silence.*] Hey, hey! Pelleas! stop! stop! [*He seizes him by the arm.*] For God's sake! . . . But can't you see?—Another step and you were in the abyss! . . .

Pelleas. I could see nothing! . . . The lantern was shedding no light my way . . .

Golaud. I missed my footing . . . but if I had not held you by the arm . . . Well, here is the stagnant water of which I spoke . . . Do you smell the stench of death that rises from it?—Come to the edge of that overhanging rock and lean over a little. It will rise and strike you in the face.

Pelleas. I smell it already . . . one would say it was the smell of tombs.

Golaud. Further, further . . . It is this smell that on certain days infects the castle. The King will not believe that it comes from here. —It would be well to wall up the cavern that contains this stagnant water. It is time, moreover, that these vaults should be examined. Have you noticed the crevices in the walls and in the pillars of the vaults? There is here some hidden, unsuspected work; and the whole castle will be engulfed one night if no care be taken. But what is to be done? Nobody likes coming down here . . . There are strange crevices in

many of the walls . . . Oh! here . . . do you smell the smell of death that rises?

Pelleas. Yes; there is a smell of death creeping up around us . . .

Golaud. Lean over; don't be afraid . . . I will hold you . . . give me . . . no, no, not your hand . . . it might slip . . . your arm, your arm . . . Do you see the abyss? [*Uneasily.*] —Pelleas? Pelleas?

Pelleas. Yes; I think I see down to the bottom of the abyss . . . Is it the light that quivers so? . . . You . . . [*He stands erect, turns round, and looks at Golaud.*]

Golaud [*in trembling voice*]. Yes; it is the lantern . . . Look, I was waving it about to light up the sides . . .

Pelleas. I am stifling here . . . let us go . . .

Golaud. Yes; let us go . . . [*Exeunt in silence.*]

SCENE IV. *A Terrace at the entrance of the Vaults.*

[*Enter Golaud and Pelleas.*]

Pelleas. Ah! I breathe at last! . . . I thought, at one moment, that I was going to faint away in those enormous caves. I was on the point of falling . . . The air is humid there and heavy as a dew of lead, and the darkness is thick as envenomed pulp . . . And now, all the air of

all the sea! . . . There is a fresh breeze, look; fresh as a new-opened leaf, on the little green waves . . . Why! They have just been watering the flowers at the foot of the terrace, and the scent of the foliage and of the wet roses rises to us here . . . It must be close upon midday, the flowers are already in the shadow of the tower . . . It is midday; I hear the bells ringing, and the children are going down to the beach to bathe . . . I did not know we had stayed so long in those caves . . .

Golaud. We went down towards eleven . . .

Pelleas. Earlier; it must have been earlier; I heard half-past ten strike.

Golaud. Half-past ten or a quarter to eleven . . .

Pelleas. They have opened all the castle windows. It will be unusually hot this afternoon . . . Why, there are our mother and Melisande at one of the windows of the tower . . .

Golaud. Yes, they have taken shelter on the shady side.—Concerning Melisande, I heard what passed between you, and all that was said yesterday evening. I know quite well that it was child's play, but it must not be repeated. Melisande is very young and very impressionable; and we must handle her all the more gently as she may be about to become a mother . . . She is very frail, hardly woman yet; and the least emotion might bring about misfortune. It is not the first time I have had cause to think that there might be something between you . . . you

are older than she; it is sufficient to have told you . . . Avoid her as much as possible; yet not markedly at all events, not markedly . . .— What is it that I see there on the road, towards the forest? . . .

Pelleas. Those are flocks that are being led to town . . .

Golaud. They are crying like lost children; one would say that they already smelt the butcher. It will be time to go in to dinner.—What a lovely day! What an admirable day for the harvest! . . . [*Exeunt.*]

Scene V. *Before the Castle*

[*Enter Golaud and little Yniold.*]

Golaud. Come, we will sit down here, Yniold; come on to my knee: from here we shall be able to see all that is going on in the forest. I seem never to see you now. You too forsake me; you are always with your little mother . . . Why, we are sitting just under little mother's windows.—She is perhaps saying her evening prayers at this moment . . . But tell me, Yniold, she and your Uncle Pelleas are often together, are they not?

Yniold. Yes, yes; always, father dear; when you are not there, father . . .

Golaud. Ah!—Look, some one is passing with a

lantern in the garden.—But I have been told that they don't care for one another . . . It appears that they often quarrel . . . eh? Is it true?

Yniold. Yes, yes; it is true.

Golaud. Yes!—Ah! ah!—But what do they quarrel about?

Yniold. About the door.

Golaud. What? About the door?—What are you telling me there?—Come now, explain yourself; why should they quarrel about the door?

Yniold. Because it cannot be left open.

Golaud. Who will not have it left open?—Come, why do they quarrel?

Yniold. I don't know, father dear, about the light.

Golaud. I am not speaking about the light; we will talk about that presently. I am speaking about the door. Answer what I ask you; you must learn to speak; it is time . . . Don't put your hand in your mouth . . . come . . .

Yniold. Father! dear father! . . . I won't do it any more . . . [*He cries.*]

Golaud. Come now; what are you crying for? What is the matter?

Yniold. Oh! oh! father dear, you hurt me . . .

Golaud. I have hurt you?—Where have I hurt you? I never meant to do it . . .

Yniold. Here, here; on my little arm . . .

Golaud. I never meant to do it; come, don't cry

any more, I will give you something to-morrow . . .

Yniold. What, father, dear?

Golaud. A quiver and arrows; but now tell me what you know about the door.

Yniold. Big arrows?

Golaud. Yes, yes; very big arrows.—But why will they not have the door left open?—Come, answer me!—no, no; don't open your mouth to cry. I am not angry. We will talk quietly as Pelleas and little mother do when they are together. What do they talk about when they are together?

Yniold. Pelleas and little mother?

Golaud. Yes; what do they talk about?

Yniold. About me; always about me.

Golaud. And what do they say about you?

Yniold. They say that I shall grow very tall.

Golaud. Ah! misery! . . . I am here like a blind man that seeks his treasure in the ocean's depths! . . . I am like a new-born infant lost in the forest, and you . . . But come, Yniold, I was deep in thought; let us talk seriously. Pelleas and little mother, do they never speak of me when I am not there? . . .

Yniold. Yes, yes, father dear; they always speak of you.

Golaud. Ah! . . . And what do they about me?

Yniold. They say that I shall grow as tall as you.

Golaud. Are you always with them?

Yniold. Yes, yes; always, always, father dear.

Golaud. They never tell you to go and play elsewhere?

Yniold. No, father dear; they are afraid when I am not there.

Golaud. They are afraid? . . . by what can you see that they are afraid?

Yniold. Little mother who is always saying: don't go away, don't go away . . . They are unhappy, and yet they laugh . . .

Golaud. But that does not prove that they are afraid . . .

Yniold. Yes, yes, father dear; she is afraid . . .

Golaud. What makes you say that she is afraid?

Yniold. They always cry in the dark.

Golaud. Ah! ah! . . .

Yniold. That makes one cry too . . .

Golaud. Yes, yes . . .

Yniold. She is pale, father dear.

Golaud. Ah! ah! . . . patience, my God, patience . . .

Yniold. What, father dear?

Golaud. Nothing, nothing, my child.—I saw a wolf pass in the forest.—Then they are on good terms?—I am glad to hear that they agree.—They kiss each other sometimes?—No? . . .

Yniold. If they kiss each other, father dear?—No, no,—ah! yes, father dear, yes, yes, once . . . once when it was raining . . .

Golaud. They kissed each other?—But how, how did they kiss?—

Yniold. So, father dear, so! . . . [*He gives him*

a kiss on the mouth, laughing.] Ah! ah! your beard, father dear! . . . It pricks! it pricks! it pricks! It is growing quite grey, father, and your hair too; all grey, all grey . . . [*The window beneath which they are sitting is here illumined, and its brightness falls upon them.*] Ah! ah! little mother has lighted her lamp! It is light now, father dear, it is light! . . .

Golaud. Yes; light is dawning . . .

Yniold. Let us go there too, father dear; let us go there too . . .

Golaud. Where do you want to go?

Yniold. Where the light is, father dear.

Golaud. No, no, my child: let us stay here in the shade awhile . . . one cannot tell, one cannot tell yet . . . Do you see these poor creatures over there who are trying to light a little fire in the forest?—It has been raining. And round the other way, do you see the old gardener trying to lift up that tree which the wind has blown across the path?—He cannot do it; the tree is too big; the tree is too heavy, and it must lie where it fell. There is no help for it all . . . I think that Pelleas is mad . . .

Yniold. No, father dear, he is not mad, but he is very kind.

Golaud. Do you want to see your little mother?

Yniold. Yes, yes; I want to see her!

Golaud. Don't make a noise; I will hoist you up to the window. It is too high for me, although I am so big . . . [*He lifts up the child.*] Don't

make the least noise; little mother would be terribly frightened . . . Can you see her?—Is she in the room?

Yniold. Yes . . . Oh! it is light!

Golaud. Is she alone?

Yniold. Yes . . . no, no; my uncle Pelleas is there too.

Golaud. He! . . .

Yniold. Ah! ah! father dear! You are hurting me! . . .

Golaud. Never mind; be quiet. I shall not do it again; look, look, Yniold! . . . I stumbled; speak lower. What are they doing?—

Yniold. They are doing nothing, father dear; they are expecting something.

Golaud. Are they near one another?

Yniold. No, father dear.

Golaud. And . . . and the bed? are they near the bed?

Yniold. The bed, father dear?—I don't see the bed.

Golaud. Lower, lower; they might hear you. Are they saying anything?

Yniold. No, father dear; they are saying nothing.

Golaud. But what are they doing?—They must be doing something . . .

Yniold. They are looking at the light.

Golaud. Both of them?

Yniold. Yes, father dear.

Golaud. And not speaking?

Yniold. No, father dear; they have not closed their eyes.

Golaud. They are not going towards one another?

Yniold. No, father dear; they have not moved.

Golaud. Are they sitting down?

Yniold. No, father dear; they are standing against the wall.

Golaud. They are making no gestures?—They are not looking at one another?—They are not making signs? . . .

Yniold. No, father dear.—Oh! oh! father, they never close their eyes . . . I am dreadfully frightened . . .

Golaud. Be still. They have not moved yet?

Yniold. No, father dear—I am frightened, father dear, let me get down! . . .

Golaud. What is there to be afraid of?—Look! look! . . .

Yniold. I dare not look any more, father dear! . . . Let me down! . . .

Golaud. Look! look! . . .

Yniold. Oh! oh! I am going to scream, father dear! . . . Let me down! let me down! . . .

Golaud. Come; we will go and see what has happened. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A Passage in the Castle*

[*Enter, meeting, Pelleas and Melisande.*]

Pelleas. Where are you going? I must speak with you this evening. Shall I see you?

Melisande. Yes.

Pelleas. I have just left my father's room. He is better. The doctor has told us that he is out of danger. Yet this morning I had a foreboding that the day would end ill. Misfortune for some time has been buzzing in my ears . . . Then, there suddenly came a great change; it is now merely a question of time. They have opened all the windows of his room. He speaks; he seems happy. He still does not speak like an ordinary man; but his ideas no longer all seem to come from the other world . . . He has recognised me. He took my hand and said with that strange look he has worn ever since his illness: "Is that you, Pelleas? Why now, I never noticed it before, but you have got the sad kindly face of one that has not long to live . . . You must travel; you must travel . . ." Strange; I shall obey him . . . My

mother was listening, and wept for joy.—Haven't you noticed? The house already seems to have come to life again, one hears breathing about one, speech, and the sound of footsteps . . . Listen; I hear voices behind that door. Quick, quick, answer me, where shall I see you?

Melisande. Where would you like?

Pelleas. In the park; near blindman's well?—Are you willing?—Will you come?

Melisande. Yes.

Pelleas. It is the last evening;—I am going to travel, as my father said. You will never see me again . . .

Melisande. You must not say that, Pelleas . . . I shall see you always; I shall be looking at you always . . .

Pelleas. It will be all very well to look . . . I shall be so far away that you will never be able to see me . . . I shall try to go very far . . . I am filled with joy, and it seems as if I had the whole weight of heaven and earth on my body, to-day . . .

Melisande. What is the matter, Pelleas?—I no longer understand what you say . . .

Pelleas. Go, go, let us part. I hear voices behind that door . . . The strangers that arrived at the castle this morning are going out . . . Come away; the strangers are there . . . [*Exeunt severally.*]

Scene II. *A Room in the Castle*

[*Arkël and Melisande are discovered.*]

Arkël. Now that the father of Pelleas is out of danger, and that illness, death's ancient handmaid, has left the castle, a little joy and a little sunlight at last will come into the house again . . . It was full time! For, ever since your arrival, we have lived whispering, as it were, about a closed room . . . And, indeed, I have pitied you, Melisande . . . You arrived here all joyous, like a child in search of a merry-making, and as soon as you entered the hall I saw you change face, and probably soul too, just as one changes face, in spite of oneself, on entering at midday a cave too gloomy and too cold . . . And since then, since then, because of all this, often, I could no longer make you out . . . I watched you, you stood there, careless perhaps, but with the strange bewildered look of one that was ever expecting a great sorrow, out in the sunshine, in a fair garden . . . I cannot explain myself . . . But I grieved to see you; for you are too young and too beautiful to live inhaling day and night already the breath of death . . . But now all will be changed. At my age,—and this perhaps is the surest fruit of all my life,—at my age I have acquired I know not what faith in the constancy of events, and I have always ob-

served that each young and beautiful being shapes around it events that are themselves young, beautiful, and happy . . . And it is you, now, that are going to open the door to the new era I dimly foresee . . . Come here; why do you stand there without answering and without so much as lifting your eyes?—I have kissed you but once until this day; and yet old men have need to touch sometimes with their lips the brow of a woman or the cheek of a child, that they may believe again in the freshness of life and repel for an instant the menaces . . . Do you fear my lips? How I have pitied you all these months! . . .

Melisande. Grandfather, I was not unhappy . . .

Arkël. You were perhaps of those that are unhappy without knowing it . . . and those are the most unhappy . . . Let me look at you so, quite close, a moment . . . One stands in such need of beauty when death is at one's side . . . [*Enter Golaud.*]

Golaud. Pelleas leaves this evening.

Arkël. There is blood upon your forehead?—What have you been doing?

Golaud. Nothing, nothing . . . I have been through a hedge of thorns.

Melisande. Bend down your head a little, my lord . . . I will wipe your brow . . .

Golaud [*repulsing her.*] I will not have you touch me, do you hear? Go away, go away!—I am

not speaking to you. Where is my sword?—I came to fetch my sword . . .

Melisande. Here; on the prayer-desk.

Golaud. Bring it. [*To Arkël.*] Another poor wretch has just been found on the sea-shore, starved to death. It seems as if they were all bent on dying under our very eyes—[*To Melisande.*] Well, my sword?—Why are you trembling?—I am not going to kill you. I merely want to examine the blade. I do not use a sword for such things. Why are you examining me as if I were some beggar? I have not come to ask your alms. Do you hope to read something in my eyes, without my reading anything in yours?—Do you think that I know anything?—[*To Arkël.*] Do you see those wide eyes? One would say they were proud to be rich . . .

Arkël. I see nothing there but great innocence . . .

Golaud. Great innocence! . . . They are greater than innocence! . . . They are purer than the eyes of a lamb . . . They could give lessons in innocence to God! Great innocence! Listen; I am so near to them that I feel the freshness of their lids when they blink; and yet, I am less far from the great secrets of the other world than from the least secret of those eyes! . . . Great innocence! . . . More than innocence! It almost seems as if the angels of heaven were eternally celebrating a baptism there . . . I know them, those eyes! I have seen them at

work! Close them! close them! or I shall close them for long . . .—Don't put your right hand up to your throat; I am saying a very simple thing . . . I have no double thoughts . . . If I had a double thought why should I not say it? Ah! ah!—don't try to run away!—Here!—Give me that hand!—Ah! your hands are too hot . . . Go away! Your flesh disgusts me . . . Here!—There is no question now of running away!—[*He seizes her by the hair.*]—You are going to follow me on your knees!—On your knees!—On your knees before me!—Ah! ah! your long hair serves some purpose at last! . . . First to the right and then to the left!—Absalom! Absalom!—Forward! backward! Down to the ground; down to the ground! . . . You see, you see; I am already laughing like an old man . . .

Arkël [*running forward.*] Golaud! . . .

Golaud [*affecting a sudden calm*]. You shall do as you please, do you see.—I attach no importance to it.—I am too old; and then, I am not a spy. I shall wait to see what chance brings, and then . . . Oh! then! . . . merely because it is the custom; merely because it is the custom . . . [*Exit.*]

Arkël. What is the matter with him?—Is he drunk?

Melisande [*in tears*]. No, no; but he does not love me any more . . . I am not happy! . . . I am not happy . . .

Arkël. If I were God I should pity the heart of men . . .

Scene III. *A Terrace before the Castle*

[*Little Yniold is discovered trying to lift a piece of rock.*]

Little Yniold. Oh! this stone is heavy! . . . It is heavier than I am . . . It is heavier than all the world . . . It is heavier than all that has happened . . . I can see my golden ball between the rock and this naughty stone, and I cannot reach it . . . My little arm is not long enough . . . and the stone will not be lifted . . . I cannot lift it . . . and there is nobody that could lift it . . . It is heavier than the whole house . . . one might think it had roots in the earth . . . [*The bleating of a flock is heard in the distance.*] Oh! oh! I hear some sheep crying . . . [*He goes to the edge of the terrace to look.*] Why! the sun has gone away . . . They are coming, the little sheep; they are coming . . . How many there are! . . . How many there are! . . . They are afraid of the dark . . . They huddle together! They huddle together! . . . They can hardly walk any further . . . They are crying! they are crying! and they are running fast . . . running fast! . . . They are already at the big cross-road. Ah!

ah! They don't know which way to go . . . They are not crying now . . . They are waiting . . . There are some that want to turn to the right . . . They all want to turn to the right . . . They may not! . . . Their shepherd is throwing earth at them . . . Ah! ah! They are going to pass this way . . . They are obeying! They are obeying! They are going to pass in front of the terrace . . . They are going to pass in front of the rocks . . . I shall see them close . . . Oh! oh! how many there are! . . . How many there are . . . All the road is full of them . . . They are all silent now . . . Shepherd! shepherd! why don't they talk any more?

The Shepherd [*unseen*]. Because it is no longer the way to the fold . . .

Yniold. Where are they going? Shepherd! shepherd!—where are they going?—He does not hear me. They are already too far away . . . They are running fast . . . They make no noise now . . . It is no longer the way to the fold . . . Where will they sleep to-night, I wonder? Oh! oh! It is too dark here! . . . I shall go and say something to somebody . . . [*Exit.*]

Scene IV. *A Spring in the Park*

[*Enter Pelleas.*]

Pelleas. It is the last evening . . . the last evening . . . All must end here . . . I have played like a child about a thing I did not suspect . . . I have played, dreaming, about the pitfalls of destiny . . . Who is it that suddenly has waked me? I shall take flight shrieking with joy and pain, as a blind man might flee from the burning of his house . . . I shall tell her that I am taking flight . . . My father is out of danger, and I have not now wherewith to lie to myself . . . It is late; she is not coming . . . It would be better for me to go without seeing her again . . . I must look at her well this time . . . There are things I cannot remember . . . One would think at times I had not seen her for a hundred years . . . And I have not yet gazed at her gaze . . . I shall have nothing left if I go away so. And all these memories . . . it is as if I were to carry away a little water in a muslin bag . . . I must see her one last time, see down into the depths of her heart . . . I must say all that I have not said . . . [*Enter Melisande.*]

Melisande. Pelleas!

Pelleas. Melisande! Is it you, Melisande?

Melisande. Yes.

Pelleas. Come here; don't stand there at the edge of the moonlight. Come here. We have so much to say to one another . . . Come here into the shadow of the lime-tree.

Melisande. Leave me in the light.

Pelleas. They might see us from the turret windows. Come here; here we have nothing to fear. Take care; they might see us . . .

Melisande. I want them to see me . . .

Pelleas. Why, what is the matter with you? Were you able to leave unseen?

Melisande. Yes; your brother was asleep . . .

Pelleas. It is late. In an hour they will close the doors. We must take care. Why did you come so late?

Melisande. Your brother had a bad dream. And then my dress caught in the nails of the door. Look, it is torn. All that time I lost, and I ran . . .

Pelleas. My poor Melisande! . . . I should almost be afraid to touch you . . . you are still all out of breath like a hunted bird . . . Is it for me, for me that you do all this? . . . I hear your heart beat as if it were my own . . . Come here . . . closer, closer to me . . .

Melisande. Why are you laughing?

Pelleas. I am not laughing;—or else I am laughing for joy, without knowing it . . . There is rather cause to weep . . .

Melisande. We have been here before . . . I remember . . .

Pelleas. Yes . . . yes . . . Long months ago . . . Then, I did not know . . . Do you know why I asked you to come this evening?

Melisande. No.

Pelleas. It is the last time I shall see you, perhaps . . . I have to go away for ever . . .

Melisande. Why do you always say that you are going? . . .

Pelleas. Must I tell you what you know already? Don't you know what I am going to tell you?

Melisande. Indeed not, indeed not; I know nothing . . .

Pelleas. Don't you know why I have to go away? . . . Don't you know that it is because . . . [*He kisses her abruptly.*] . . . I love you . . .

Melisande [*in a low voice*]. I love you too . . .

Pelleas. Oh! oh! What did you say, Melisande? . . . I hardly heard what you said . . . The ice has been broken with red-hot irons . . . You say that in a voice that comes from the end of the world! . . . I hardly heard you . . . You love me? You love me too? . . . Since when have you loved me?

Melisande. Since . . . always . . . Since I first saw you.

Pelleas. Oh! how you say that! . . . One would say that your voice had passed over the sea in spring-time! . . . I never heard it until now . . . it seems as if rain had fallen on my heart . . . You say that so simply! . . . As a questioned angel might . . . I cannot believe it,

Melisande . . . Why should you love me? But why do you love me? Is it true what you say? You are not deceiving me? You are not lying just a little, to make me smile? . . .

Melisande. No, I never lie; I only lie to your brother.

Pelleas. Oh! how you say that! . . . Your voice! your voice! . . . It is fresher and truer than water! . . . It feels like pure water on my lips! . . . It feels like pure water on my hands . . . Give me, give me your hands . . . Oh! your hands are small . . . I did not know you were so beautiful! . . . I had never seen anything so beautiful before I saw you . . . I was ill at ease, I sought throughout the house, I sought throughout the country . . . And I could not find beauty . . . And now I have found you! . . . I have found you! . . . I don't believe earth holds a more beautiful woman! . . . Where are you? I no longer hear you breathe . . .

Melisande. That is because I am looking at you . . .

Pelleas. Why are you looking at me so solemnly? We are already in the shade. It is too dark under this tree. Come into the light. We cannot see how happy we are. Come, come; we have so little time . . .

Melisande. No, no; let us stay here . . . I am nearer to you in the dark . . .

Pelleas. Where are your eyes? You are not

going to run away from me? You are not thinking of me at this moment.

Melisande. Indeed yes, indeed yes; I think but of you . . .

Pelleas. You were looking elsewhere . . .

Melisande. I saw you elsewhere . . .

Pelleas. You are rapt . . . What is the matter with you? You seem not to be happy . . .

Melisande. Yes, yes; I am happy, but I am sad . . .

Pelleas. One is sad, often, when one loves . . .

Melisande. I must always weep when I think of you . . .

Pelleas. I too . . . I too, Melisande . . . I am close to you; I weep for joy, and yet . . . [*He kisses her again.*] . . . you are strange when I kiss you so . . . You are so beautiful that one would say you were going to die . . .

Melisande. You too . . .

Pelleas. There, there . . . We cannot do as we wish . . . I did not love you the first time I saw you . . .

Melisande. Nor I . . . nor I . . . I was afraid . . .

Pelleas. I could not admit of your eyes . . . I wanted to go away at once . . . and then . . .

Melisande. I never wanted to come . . . I still don't know why, I was afraid to come . . .

Pelleas. There are so many things one will never know . . . We are always waiting; and then

. . . What noise is that? They are closing the doors! . . .

Melisande. Yes, they have closed the doors . . .

Pelleas. We shall not be able to go back! Do you hear the bolts? Listen! listen! . . . the big chains! . . . the big chains! . . . It is too late, it is too late! . . .

Melisande. All the better! all the better! all the better! . . .

Pelleas. You? . . . See, see . . . It is no longer we who wish it! . . . All's lost, all's saved! all's saved this evening! Come! come . . . My heart beats like a madman, right up at my throat . . . [*He enfolds her.*] Listen! listen! my heart is about to choke me . . . Come! come! . . . Ah! how beautiful it is in the dark! . . .

Melisande. There is some one behind us! . . .

Pelleas. I see no one . . .

Melisande. I heard a noise . . .

Pelleas. I only hear your heart in the dark . . .

Melisande. I heard the dead leaves crackle . . .

Pelleas. It is the wind that has hushed suddenly . . . It fell whilst we were kissing . . .

Melisande. How tall our shadows are this evening! . . .

Pelleas. They entwine right down to the end of the garden . . . Oh! how far from us they kiss! . . . Look! look! . . .

Melisande [*in stifled voice*]. A-a-h! He is behind a tree!

Pelleas. Who?
Melisande. Golaud!
Pelleas. Golaud?—where then?—I see nothing . . .
Melisande. There . . . at the tip of our shadows . . .
Pelleas. Yes, yes; I have seen him . . . We must not turn round too suddenly . . .
Melisande. He has his sword . . .
Pelleas. I have none . . .
Melisande. He saw that we were kissing . . .
Pelleas. He does not know that we have seen him . . . Do not move; do not turn your head . . . he would rush out upon us . . . He will stay there as long as he thinks we know nothing . . . He is watching us . . . He is still motionless . . . Go, go at once, this way . . . I will wait for him, I will hold him back . . .
Melisande. No, no, no! . . .
Pelleas. Go! go! He has seen everything! . . . He will kill us! . . .
Melisande. All the better! all the better! all the better! . . .
Pelleas. He is coming! he is coming! . . . Your mouth! . . . Your mouth! . . .
Melisande. Yes! . . . yes! yes! . . . [*They kiss distractedly.*]
Pelleas. Oh! oh! All the stars are falling! . . .
Melisande. On me too! on me too! . . .
Pelleas. Again! Again! . . . Give! give! . . .
Melisande. All! all! all! [*Golaud rushes upon*

them, sword in hand, and strikes Pelleas, who falls beside the spring. Melisande flies terror-stricken.]

Melisande [*flying*]. Oh! oh! I am not brave . . . I am not brave! . . . [*Golaud pursues her through the wood in silence.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. *A low hall in the Castle*

[*The Maid-servants are discovered gathered together; some children are playing outside, before one of the air-holes.*]

An old Servant. Wait and see, wait and see, girls; it will be this evening. They will come and tell us presently . . .

Another Servant. They will not come and tell us . . . They no longer know what they are about . . .

Third Servant. Let us wait here . . .

Fourth Servant. We shall know well enough when to go upstairs . . .

Fifth Servant. When the time comes, we will go up of our own accord . . .

Sixth Servant. There is no sound to be heard now in the house . . .

Seventh Servant. We ought to tell those children to be quiet who are playing in front of the air-hole.

Eighth Servant. They will keep quiet of themselves presently.

Ninth Servant. The time has not yet come . . . [*Enter an old Servant.*]

The old Servant. No one can get into the room now. I listened for over an hour . . . One might have heard the flies walk on the doors . . . I heard nothing . . .

First Servant. Have they left her alone in the room?

The old Servant. No, no; I think the room is full of people.

First Servant. They will be coming, they will be coming presently . . .

The old Servant. Lord! Lord! It is not happiness that has entered the house . . . One may not speak, but if I could tell what I know . . .

Second Servant. It was you that found them at the door?

The old Servant. Why yes, yes; it was I that found them. The doorkeeper says it was he that saw them first; yet it was I that waked him. He was lying asleep on his stomach and would not wake up.—And now he comes and says: It was I that saw them first. Is that fair?—You must know that I had burnt myself lighting a lamp to go down into the cellar.—Whatever was I going to do in the cellar?—I can't remember now what I was going to do in the cellar.—Anyway, I got up very early; it was not yet quite light; I said to myself: I will cross the courtyard and then I will open the door. Well, I went downstairs on tip-toe and opened the door as if it were any

ordinary door . . . Lord! Lord! What did I see? Guess what I saw? . . .

First Servant. They were just in front of the door?

The old Servant. They were lying, both of them, in front of the door! . . . Just like poor folk that have been hungry too long . . . They were clinging close together as little children do when they are afraid. The little princess was nearly dead, and big Golaud still had his sword sticking in his side . . . There was blood on the stones . . .

Second Servant. We ought to tell the children to be quiet . . . They are screaming with all their might in front of the air-hole . . .

Third Servant. One can no longer hear what one is saying . . .

Fourth Servant. There is nothing to be done; I have tried already, they will not be quiet . . .

First Servant. It seems that he is all but cured?

The old Servant. Who?

First Servant. Big Golaud.

Third Servant. Yes; yes; they have led him into his wife's room. I met them just now in the passage. They were supporting him as if he were drunk. He still cannot walk alone.

The old Servant. He could not manage to kill himself; he is too big. But she was hardly wounded at all, and it is she that is going to die . . . Do you understand it?

First Servant. Did you see the wound?

The old Servant. As clearly as I see you, my girl. —I saw everything, do you understand . . . I saw it before any of the others . . . A tiny little wound in her little left breast. A little wound that would not kill a pigeon. Does it seem natural?

First Servant. Yes, yes; there is something beneath all this . . .

Second Servant. Yes; but she was confined three days ago . . .

The old Servant. Just so! . . . She was confined on her deathbed; is not that a great warning? —And what a child! Have you seen it?—A little puny girl that a beggar would not care to bring into the world . . . a little waxen thing that came much too soon . . . a little waxen thing that has to live in lamb's wool . . . yes, yes; it is not happiness that has entered the house . . .

First Servant. Yes, yes; God's hand has moved . . .

Second Servant. All this has not happened for no reason . . .

Third Servant. And then our kind lord Pelleas . . . where is he? Nobody knows . . .

The old Servant. Indeed, yes; every one knows . . . But no one dares speak of it . . . One must not speak of this . . . one must not speak of that . . . one no longer speaks of anything . . . one no longer speaks the truth . . . But I know that he was found at the bottom of

blindman's well . . . only nobody, nobody has been able to get a sight of him . . . There, there, it is only on the last day that all will be known . . .

First Servant. I dare no longer sleep here . . .

The old Servant. When once misfortune has entered the house, it's all very well to hold one's peace . . .

Third Servant. Yes; it finds you out all the same . . .

The old Servant. Yes, yes; but we go not as we would . . .

Fourth Servant. We do not as we would . . .

First Servant. They are afraid of us now . . .

Second Servant. They keep counsel, all of them . . .

Third Servant. They lower their eyes in the passages.

Fourth Servant. They speak in whispers only.

Fifth Servant. One might think they had all done it together.

Sixth Servant. There is no knowing what they have done . . .

Seventh Servant. What is one to do when the masters are afraid? . . . [*Silence.*]

First Servant. I no longer hear the children calling.

Second Servant. They have sat down in front of the air-hole.

Third Servant. They are pressing close to one another.

The old Servant. I hear no sound now in the house . . .

First Servant. One cannot even hear the children breathe . . .

The old Servant. Come, come; it is time to go upstairs . . . [*Exeunt, in silence.*]

Scene II. *A Room in the Castle*

[*Arkël, Golaud, and the Doctor are discovered in a corner of the room. Melisande is lying on her bed.*]

The Doctor. It is not of this small wound that she could die; a bird would not die of it . . . it is therefore not you that have killed her, my good lord; you must not distress yourself so . . . She could not have lived . . . She was born for no reason . . . to die; and now she is dying for no reason . . . And then, it is not said that we shall not save her . . .

Arkël. No, no; it seems to me that we are too silent, in spite of ourselves, in her room . . . It is a bad sign . . . See how she sleeps . . . slowly, slowly . . . it is as if her soul had grown chill for ever . . .

Golaud. I have killed without cause! I have killed without cause! . . . Is it not enough to make the stones weep! . . . They had kissed each other, like little children . . . They had

simply kissed each other . . . They were brother and sister . . . And I, and I all at once! . . . I did it in spite of myself, you see . . . I did it in spite of myself . . .

The Doctor. Take care; I think she is waking . . .

Melisande. Open the window . . . open the window . . .

Arkël. Do you wish me to open this one, Melisande?

Melisande. No, no, the big window . . . the big window . . . that I may see . . .

Arkël. Is the sea air not too cold this evening?

The Doctor. Do as she asks . . .

Melisande. Thank you . . . Is that the sun setting?

Arkël. Yes; the sun is setting on the sea; it is late. How are you feeling, Melisande?

Melisande. Well, well. Why do you ask me that? I have never felt better. Yet it seems as if I knew of something . . .

Arkël. What do you say? I don't understand you . . .

Melisande. I don't myself understand all that I say, do you see . . . I don't know what I say . . . I don't know what I know . . . I no longer say what I wish . . .

Arkël. Come now, come now . . . It is a joy to hear you speak so; you were a little delirious these last days, and we could not always under-

stand you . . . But now, that is all very far away . . .

Melisande. I don't know . . . Are you all alone in the room, grandfather?

Arkël. No; the doctor who cured you is here too . . .

Melisande. Ah . . .

Arkël. And then there is some one else besides . . .

Melisande. Who is it?

Arkël. It is . . . You must not be afraid . . . He does not wish you the least harm, be sure of it . . . If you are afraid, he will go away . . . He is very unhappy . . .

Melisande. Who is it?

Arkël. It is . . . it is your husband . . . it is Golaud . . .

Melisande. Golaud is here? Why does he not come close to me?

Golaud [*dragging himself towards the bed*]. Melisande . . . Melisande . . .

Melisande. Is that you, Golaud? I hardly knew you again . . . It is that the evening sun is shining in my eyes . . . Why are you looking at the walls? You have grown thinner and older . . . Is it long since we saw each other?

Golaud [*to Arkël and the Doctor*]. Will you go out of the room an instant, if you please, if you please . . . I will leave the door wide open . . . An instant only . . . I want to say something to her; otherwise I cannot die . . . Will

you? Go down to the end of the passage; you can come back at once, at once . . . Do not refuse me this . . . I am a miserable wretch. [*Exeunt Arkël and the Doctor.*] Melisande, have you some pity for me, as I have for you? . . . Melisande? . . . Do you forgive me, Melisande? . . .

Melisande. Yes, yes, I forgive you . . . What is there to forgive? . . .

Golaud. I have done you such great wrong, Melisande . . . I cannot tell you the wrong I have done you . . . But I see it, I see it so clearly to-day . . . ever since the first day . . . And all that hitherto I did not know, leaps into my eyes this evening . . . And it is all my fault, all that has happened, all that is going to happen . . . If I could only say it, you would see how clearly I see! . . . I see all, I see all! . . . But I loved you so! . . . I loved you so! . . . And now some one is going to die . . . It is I that am going to die . . . And I want to know . . . I want to ask you . . . You will not take it amiss? . . . I want . . . The truth has to be told to one about to die . . . He has to know the truth, else he could not sleep . . . Do you swear to tell me the truth?

Melisande. Yes.

Golaud. Did you love Pelleas?

Melisande. Why yes: I loved him. Where is he?

Golaud. Don't you understand me? Won't you understand me? It seems to me . . . It seems

to me . . . Well, it is this: I ask you whether you loved him with a forbidden love? . . . Did you . . . were you guilty? Tell me; tell me, yes, yes, yes? . . .

Melisande. No, no; we were not guilty. Why do you ask me that?

Golaud. Melisande! . . . tell me the truth, for the love of God!

Melisande. Why have I not told you the truth?

Golaud. Do not lie thus in the hour of death!

Melisande. Who is going to die?—Is it I?

Golaud. You, you! and I, I too, after you! . . . And we must have the truth . . . We must at last have the truth, do you hear? . . . Tell me all! Tell me all! I forgive you all! . . .

Melisande. Why am I going to die? I did not know . . .

Golaud. You know it now! . . . It is time! It is time! Quick! Quick! . . . The truth! the truth! . . .

Melisande. The truth . . . the truth . . .

Golaud. Where are you? Melisande! Where are you? This is not natural! Melisande! Where are you? Where are you going? [*Perceiving Arkël and the Doctor at the door of the room.*] Yes, yes; you can come in . . . I know nothing; it is useless . . . It is too late; she is already too far from us . . . I shall never know! . . . I shall die here like a blind man! . . .

Arkël. What have you done? You will kill her . . .

Golaud. I have already killed her . . .
Arkël. Melisande . . .
Melisande. Is that you, grandfather?
Arkël. Yes, my daughter . . . What would you like me to do?
Melisande. Is it true that winter is here?
Arkël. Why do you ask it?
Melisande. Because it is cold and there are no leaves left . . .
Arkël. Are you cold?—Would you like to have the windows shut?
Melisande. No, no . . . not until the sun is deep in the sea.—He is going down slowly; then it is true that winter has begun?
Arkël. Yes.—Don't you like the winter?
Melisande. Oh! no. I am frightened of the cold. —I am so frightened of the great cold . . .
Arkël. Do you feel better?
Melisande. Yes, yes; I no longer feel all those anxieties . . .
Arkël. Would you like to see your child?
Melisande. What child?
Arkël. Your child.—You are a mother . . . You have brought a little girl into the world . . .
Melisande. Where is she?
Arkël. Here . . .
Melisande. It is strange . . . I cannot lift my arms to take her . . .
Arkël. That is because you are still very weak . . . I will hold her myself; look . . .

Melisande. She is not smiling . . . She is little . . . She is going to cry too . . . I pity her . . . [*The room is invaded, little by little, by the maid-servants, who range themselves in silence along the walls and wait.*]

Golaud [*rising abruptly*]. What is it?—What are all these women doing here? . . .

The Doctor. They are the servants . . .

Arkël. Who called for them?

The Doctor. It was not I . . .

Golaud. Why have you come here?—Nobody asked for you . . . What are you doing here?—But what is it then?—Answer! . . . [*The servants answer nothing.*]

Arkël. Don't speak too loud . . . She is going to sleep; she has closed her eyes . . .

Golaud. This is not . . . ?

The Doctor. No, no; see, she breathes . . .

Arkël. Her eyes are full of tears.—It is now her soul that weeps . . . Why is she spreading out her arms?—What does she want?

The Doctor. It is towards the child, no doubt. It is the mother's struggle against . . .

Golaud. Now?—now?—You must say it, speak! speak! . . .

The Doctor. Perhaps.

Golaud. At once? . . . Oh! Oh! I must tell her . . . Melisande! Melisande! . . . Leave me! leave me alone with her! . . .

Arkël. No, no; come no nearer . . . Do not

trouble her . . . Do not speak to her again . . . You know not what the soul is . . .

Golaud. It is not my fault . . . It is not my fault.

Arkël. Hush . . . Hush . . . We must speak in whispers, now.—We must trouble her no more . . . The human soul is very silent . . . The human soul likes to slip away in solitude . . . It suffers so timidly . . . But the sadness, Golaud . . . but the sadness of all that one sees! . . . Oh! oh! oh! . . . [*Here all the servants fall suddenly on to their knees at the end of the room.*]

Arkël [*turning*]. What is it?

The Doctor [*approaching the bed and touching the body*]. They are right . . . [*Long silence.*]

Arkël. I saw nothing.—Are you sure? . . .

The Doctor. Yes, yes.

Arkël. I heard nothing . . . So swiftly, so swiftly . . . All at once . . . She has gone away without a word . . .

Golaud [*sobbing*]. Oh! oh! oh!

Arkël. Do not stay here, Golaud . . . She needs silence, now . . . Come, come . . . It is terrible, but it is not your fault . . . It was a little gentle being, so quiet, so timid, and so silent . . . It was a poor little mysterious being, like all the world . . . She lies there as if she were her own child's big sister . . . Come, come . . . O God! O God! . . . I too shall understand none of it . . . Let us go from here.

Come; the child must not stay here, in this room . . . It must live now, in her stead . . . The poor little one's turn has come . . . [*Exeunt in silence.*]

THE DEATH OF TINTAGILES

[*Translated by Alfred Sutro*]

CHARACTERS

TINTAGILES
YGRAINE
BELLANGÈRE } Sisters of Tintagiles
AGLOVALE
THREE SERVANTS of the Queen

The Death of Tintagiles, published in 1894 together with *Alladine and Palomides* and *Interior* under the title of *Three Little Dramas for Marionettes,* is the author's favourite, and in general estimation his best, play.

THE DEATH OF TINTAGILES

ACT I

[*On the top of a hill overlooking the castle.*]

[*Enter Ygraine, holding Tintagiles by the hand.*]

Ygraine. Your first night will be sad, Tintagiles. The roar of the sea is already about us; and the trees are moaning. It is late. The moon is sinking behind the poplars that stifle the palace . . . We are alone, perhaps; but here one has ever to be on one's guard. They seem to watch lest the smallest happiness come near. I said to myself one day, right down in the depths of my soul—and God himself could scarcely hear;—I said to myself one day that I was feeling almost happy . . . There needed nothing more; and very soon after, our old father died, and our two brothers disappeared, and not a living creature can tell us where they are. I am here all alone, with my poor sister and you, my little Tintagiles; and I have no confidence in the future . . . Come to me; let me take you on my knees. First kiss me; and put your little arms—there—right round my neck . . . perhaps they will not be able to unfasten them

. . . Do you remember the time when it was I who carried you in the evening, when the hour had come; and how frightened you were at the shadows of my lamp in the corridors, those long corridors with not a single window? I felt my soul tremble on my lips when I saw you again, suddenly, this morning . . . I thought you were so far away and in safety . . . Who made you come here?

Tintagiles. I do not know, little sister.

Ygraine. Do you remember what they said?

Tintagiles. They said I must go away.

Ygraine. But why had you to go away?

Tintagiles. Because the Queen wished it.

Ygraine. Did they not say why she wished it?—I am sure they must have said many things.

Tintagiles. Little sister, I did not hear.

Ygraine. When they spoke among themselves, what was it they said?

Tintagiles. Little sister, they dropped their voices when they spoke.

Ygraine. All the time?

Tintagiles. All the time, sister Ygraine; except when they looked at me.

Ygraine. Did they say nothing about the Queen?

Tintagiles. They said, sister Ygraine, that no one ever saw her.

Ygraine. And the people who were with you on the ship, did they say nothing?

Tintagiles. They gave all their time to the wind and the sails, sister Ygraine.

Ygraine. Ah! . . . That does not surprise me, my child . . .

Tintagiles. They left me all alone, little sister.

Ygraine. Listen to me, Tintagiles; I will tell you what I know . . .

Tintagiles. What do you know, sister Ygraine?

Ygraine. Very little, my child . . . My sister and I have gone on living here ever since we were born, not daring to understand the things that happened . . . I have lived a long time in this island, and I might as well have been blind; yet it all seemed natural to me . . . A bird that flew, a leaf that trembled, a rose that opened . . . these were events to me. Such silence has always reigned here that a ripe fruit falling in the park would draw faces to the window . . . And no one seemed to have any suspicion . . . but one night I learned that there must be something besides . . . I wished to escape and I could not . . . Have you understood what I am telling you?

Tintagiles. Yes, yes, little sister; I can understand anything . . .

Ygraine. Then let us not talk any more of these things . . . one does not know . . . Do you see, behind the dead trees which poison the horizon, do you see the castle, there, right down in the valley?

Tintagiles. I see something very black—is that the castle, sister Ygraine?

Ygraine. Yes, it is very black . . . It lies far

down amid a mass of gloomy shadows . . . It is there that we have to live . . . They might have built it on the top of the great mountains that surround it . . . The mountains are blue in the day-time . . . One could have breathed. One could have looked down on the sea and on the plains beyond the cliffs . . . But they preferred to build it deep down in the valley; too low even for the air to come . . . It is falling in ruins, and no one troubles . . . The walls are crumbling: it might be fading away in the gloom . . . There is only one tower which time does not touch . . . It is enormous: and its shadow is always on the house.

Tintagiles. They are lighting something, sister Ygraine . . . See, see, the great red windows! . . .

Ygraine. They are the windows of the tower, Tintagiles; they are the only ones in which you will ever see light: it is there that the Queen has her throne.

Tintagiles. Shall I not see the Queen?

Ygraine. No one can see her.

Tintagiles. Why can no one see her?

Ygraine. Come closer, Tintagiles . . . Not even a bird or a blade of grass must hear us.

Tintagiles. There is no grass, little sister . . . [*a moment's silence*]. What does the Queen do?

Ygraine. That no one knows, my child. She is never seen . . . She lives there, all alone in

the tower; and those who wait on her do not go out by daylight . . . She is very old; she is the mother of our mother, and she wishes to reign alone . . . She is suspicious and jealous, and they say she is mad . . . She is afraid lest some one should raise himself to her place; and it is probably because of this fear of hers that you have been brought hither . . . Her orders are carried out: but no one knows how . . . She never leaves the tower, and all the gates are closed night and day . . . I have never seen her, but it seems others have, long ago, when she was young.

Tintagiles. Is she very ugly, sister Ygraine?

Ygraine. They say she is not beautiful, and that her form is strange . . . But those who have seen her dare not speak of her . . . And who knows whether they have seen her? She has a power which we do not understand, and we live here with a terrible weight on our soul . . . You must not be unduly frightened, or have bad dreams; we will watch over you, little Tintagiles, and no harm can come to you; but do not stray far from me, or your sister Bellangère, or our old master Aglovale.

Tintagiles. Aglovale, too, sister Ygraine?

Ygraine. Aglovale too . . . he loves us . . .

Tintagelis. He is so old, little sister!

Ygraine. He is old, but very wise . . . He is the only friend we have left; and he knows many things . . . It is strange; she made you

come here, and no one was told of it . . . I do not know what is in my heart . . . I was sorrowful and glad to know that you were far away, beyond the sea . . . And now . . . I was taken by surprise . . . I went out this morning to see whether the sun was rising over the mountains; and I saw you on the threshold . . . I knew you at once.

Tintagiles. No, no, little sister; it was I who laughed first . . .

Ygraine. I could not laugh . . . just then . . . You will understand . . . It is time, Tintagiles, and the wind is becoming black on the sea . . . Kiss me, before getting up; kiss me, harder, again, again . . . You do not know how one loves . . . Give me your little hand . . . I will keep it in mine, and we will go back to the old sick castle. [*They go out.*]

ACT II

[*A room in the castle, in which Aglovale and Ygraine are seated.*]

[*Enter Bellangère.*]

Bellangère. Where is Tintagiles?

Ygraine. He is here; do not speak too loud. He is asleep in the other room. He was a little pale, he did not seem well. The journey had tired him—he was a long time on the sea. Or perhaps it is the atmosphere of the castle which has alarmed his little soul. He was crying, and did not know why he cried. I nursed him on my knees; come, look at him . . . He is asleep in our bed . . . He sleeps very gravely, with one hand on his brow, like a little sorrowful king . . .

Bellangère [*suddenly bursting into tears*]. Sister! Sister! . . . my poor sister! . . .

Ygraine. Why are you crying?

Bellangère. I dare not tell what I know . . . and I am not sure that I know anything . . . but yet I have heard—that which one could not hear . . .

Ygraine. What have you heard?

Bellangère. I was passing close to the corridors of the tower . . .

Ygraine. Ah!

Bellangère. One of the doors was ajar. I pushed it very gently . . . I went in . . .

Ygraine. Where?

Bellangère. I had never seen . . . There were other corridors lighted with lamps; and then low galleries, which seemed to have no end . . . I knew it was forbidden to go farther . . . I was afraid and was about to turn back, but there was a sound of voices . . . though one could scarcely hear . . .

Ygraine. It must have been the servants of the Queen; they live at the foot of the tower . . .

Bellangère. I do not know quite what it was . . . There must have been more than one door between; and the voices came to me like the voice of some one who is being strangled . . . I went as near as I could . . . I am not sure of anything: but I believe they were speaking of a child who had arrived to-day, and of a crown of gold . . . They seemed to be laughing . . .

Ygraine. They were laughing?

Bellangère. Yes, I think they were laughing . . . unless it was that they were crying, or that it was something I did not understand; for one heard badly, and their voices were low . . . There seemed to be a great many of them moving about in the vault . . . They were speaking of the child that the Queen wished to see . . . They will probably come here this evening . . .

Ygraine. What? . . . this evening? . . .

Bellangère. Yes . . . yes . . . I think so . . . yes . . .

Ygraine. Did they not mention any name?

Bellangère. They spoke of a child—a little, little child . . .

Ygraine. There is no other child here . . .

Bellangère. Just then they raised their voices a little, for one of them had doubted whether the day was come . . .

Ygraine. I know what that means, and it will not be the first time that they have left the tower . . . I knew only too well why she made him come . . . but I could not think she would show such haste as this! . . . We shall see . . . there are three of us, and we have time . . .

Bellangère. What do you mean to do?

Ygraine. I do not know yet what I shall do, but I shall surprise her . . . do you know what that means, you who only can tremble? . . . I will tell you . . .

Bellangère. What?

Ygraine. She shall not take him without a struggle . . .

Bellangère. We are alone, sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. Ah! it is true we are alone! . . . There is only one thing to be done, and it never fails us! . . . Let us wait on our knees as we did before . . . Perhaps she will have pity! . . . She allows herself to be moved by tears . . . We must grant her everything she asks; she will

smile perhaps; and it is her habit to spare all who kneel . . . All these years she has been there in her enormous tower, devouring those we love, and not a single one has dared strike her in the face . . . She lies on our soul like the stone of a tomb, and no one dares stretch out his arm . . . In the times when there were men here, they too were afraid, and fell upon their faces . . . To-day it is the woman's turn . . . we shall see . . . It is time that some one should dare to rise . . . No one knows on what her power rests, and I will no longer live in the shadow of her tower . . . Go away, if you two can only tremble like this—go away both of you, and leave me still more alone . . . I will wait for her . . .

Bellangère. Sister, I do not know what has to be done, but I will wait with you . . .

Aglovale. I too will wait, my daughter . . . My soul has long been ill at ease . . . You will try . . . we have tried more than once . . .

Ygraine. You have tried . . . you also?

Aglovale. They have all tried . . . But at the last moment their strength has failed them . . . You too, you shall see . . . If she were to command me to go up to her this very evening, I would put my two hands together and say nothing; and my weary feet would climb the staircase, without lingering and without hastening, though I know full well that none come down again with eyes unclosed . . . There is no

courage left in me against her . . . our hands are helpless, and can touch no one . . . Other hands than these are wanted, and all is useless . . . But you are hopeful, and I will assist you . . . Close the doors, my child . . . Awaken Tintagiles; bare your little arms and enfold him within them, and take him on your knees . . . we have no other defence . . .

ACT III

[*The same room.*]

[*Ygraine and Aglovale.*]

Ygraine. I have been to look at the doors. There are three of them. We will watch the large one . . . The two others are low and heavy. They are never opened. The keys were lost long ago, and the iron bars are sunk into the walls. Help me close this door; it is heavier than the gate of a city . . . It is massive; the lightning itself could not pierce through it . . . are you prepared for all that may happen?

Aglovale [*seating himself on the threshold*]. I will go seat myself on the steps; my sword upon my knees . . . I do not think this is the first time that I have waited and watched here, my child; and there are moments when one does not understand all that one remembers . . . I have done all this before, I do not know when . . . but I have never dared draw my sword . . . Now, it lies there before me, though my arms no longer have strength; but I intend to try . . . It is perhaps time that men should defend themselves, even though they do not understand . . . [*Bellangère, carrying Tintagiles in her arms, comes out of the adjoining room.*]

Bellangère. He was awake . . .
Ygraine. He is pale . . . what ails him?
Bellangère. I do not know . . . he was very silent . . . He was crying . . .
Ygraine. Tintagiles . . .
Bellangère. He is looking away from you.
Ygraine. He does not seem to know me . . . Tintagiles, where are you?—It is your sister who speaks to you . . . What are you looking at so fixedly?—Turn round . . . come, I will play with you . . .
Tintagiles. No . . . no . . .
Ygraine. You do not want to play?
Tintagiles. I cannot stand, sister Ygraine . . .
Ygraine. You cannot stand? . . . Come, come, what is the matter with you?—Are you suffering any pain? . . .
Tintagiles. Yes . . .
Ygraine. Tell me where it is, Tintagiles, and I will cure you . . .
Tintagiles. I cannot tell, sister Ygraine . . . everywhere . . .
Ygraine. Come to me, Tintagiles . . . You know that my arms are softer, and I will put them around you, and you will feel better at once . . . Give him to me, Bellangère . . . He shall sit on my knee, and the pain will go . . . There, you see? . . . Your big sisters are here . . . They are close to you . . . we will defend you, and no evil can come near . . .

Tintagiles. It has come, sister Ygraine—Why is there no light, sister Ygraine?

Ygraine. There is a light, my child . . . Do you not see the lamp that hangs from the rafters?

Tintagiles. Yes, yes . . . It is not large . . . Are there no others?

Ygraine. Why should there be others? We can see what we have to see . . .

Tintagiles. Ah! . . .

Ygraine. Oh! your eyes are deep . . .

Tintagiles. So are yours, sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. I did not notice it this morning . . . I have just seen in your eyes . . . We do not quite know what the soul thinks it sees . . .

Tintagiles. I have not seen the soul, sister Ygraine . . . But why is Aglovale on the threshold?

Ygraine. He is resting a little . . . He wanted to kiss you before going to bed . . . he was waiting for you to wake . . .

Tintagiles. What has he on his knees?

Ygraine. On his knees? I see nothing on his knees . . .

Tintagiles. Yes, yes, there is something . . .

Aglovale. It is nothing, my child . . . I was looking at my old sword; and I scarcely recognise it . . . It has served me many years, but for a long time past I have lost confidence in it, and I think it is going to break . . . Here, just by the hilt, there is a little stain . . . I had noticed that the steel was growing paler, and I

asked myself . . . I do not remember what I asked myself . . . My soul is very heavy today . . . What is one to do? . . . Men must needs live and await the unforeseen . . . And after that they must still act as if they hoped . . . There are sad evenings when our useless lives taste bitter in our mouths, and we would like to close our eyes . . . It is late, and I am tired . . .

Tintagiles. He has wounds, sister Ygraine.

Ygraine. Where?

Tintagiles. On his forehead and on his hands . . .

Aglovale. Those are very old wounds, from which I suffer no longer, my child . . . The light must be falling on them this evening . . . You had not noticed them before?

Tintagiles. He looks sad, sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. No, no, he is not sad, but very weary . . .

Tintagiles. You too are sad, sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. Why no, why no; look at me, I am smiling . . .

Tintagiles. And my other sister too . . .

Ygraine. Oh no, she too is smiling.

Tintagiles. No, that is not a smile . . . I know . . .

Ygraine. Come, kiss me, and think of something else . . . [*She kisses him.*]

Tintagiles. Of what shall I think, sister Ygraine? —Why do you hurt me when you kiss me?

Ygraine. Did I hurt you?

Tintagiles. Yes . . . I do not know why I hear your heart beat, sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. Do you hear it beat?

Tintagiles. Oh! Oh! it beats as though it wanted to . . .

Ygraine. What?

Tintagiles. I do not know, sister Ygraine.

Ygraine. It is wrong to be frightened without reason, and to speak in riddles . . . Oh! your eyes are full of tears . . . Why are you unhappy? I hear your heart beating, now . . . people always hear them when they hold one another so close. It is then that the heart speaks and says things that the tongue does not know . . .

Tintagiles. I heard nothing before . . .

Ygraine. That was because . . . Oh, but your heart! . . . What is the matter? . . . It is bursting! . . .

Tintagiles [*crying*]. Sister Ygraine! sister Ygraine!

Ygraine. What is it?

Tintagiles. I have heard . . . They . . . they are coming!

Ygraine. Who? Who are coming? . . . What has happened? . . .

Tintagiles. The door! The door! They were there! . . . [*He falls backwards on to Ygraine's knees.*]

Ygraine. What is it? . . . He has . . . he has fainted . . .

Bellangère. Take care . . . take care . . . He will fall . . .

Aglovale [*rising brusquely, his sword in his hand*]. I too can hear . . . there are steps in the corridor.

Ygraine. Oh! . . . [*A moment's silence—they all listen.*]

Aglovale. Yes, I hear . . . There is a crowd of them . . .

Ygraine. A crowd . . . a crowd . . . how?

Aglovale. I do not know . . . one hears and one does not hear . . . They do not move like other creatures, but they come . . . They are touching the door . . .

Ygraine [*clasping Tintagiles in her arms*]. Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . .

Bellangère [*embracing him*]. Let me, too! let me! . . . Tintagiles!

Aglovale. They are shaking the door . . . listen . . . do not breathe . . . They are whispering . . . [*A key is heard turning harshly in the lock.*]

Ygraine. They have the key!

Aglovale. Yes . . . yes . . . I was sure of it . . . Wait . . . [*He plants himself, with sword outstretched, on the last step. To the two sisters.*] Come! come both! . . . [*For a moment there is silence. The door opens slowly. Aglovale thrusts his sword wildly through*

the opening, driving the point between the beams. The sword breaks with a loud report under the silent pressure of the timber, and the pieces of steel roll down the steps with a resounding clang. Ygraine leaps up, carrying in her arms Tintagiles, who has fainted; and she, Bellangère, and Aglovale, putting forth all their strength, try, but in vain, to close the door, which slowly opens wider and wider, although no one can be seen or heard. Only a cold and calm light penetrates into the room. At this moment Tintagiles, suddenly stretching out his limbs, regains consciousness, sends forth a long cry of deliverance, and embraces his sister—and at this very instant the door, which resists no longer, falls to brusquely under their pressure, which they have not had time to stop.]

Ygraine. Tintagiles! [*They look with amazement at each other.*]

Aglovale [*waiting at the door*]. I hear nothing now . . .

Ygraine [*wild with joy*]. Tintagiles! Tintagiles! Look! Look! . . . He is saved! . . . Look at his eyes . . . you can see the blue . . . He is going to speak . . . They saw we were watching . . . They did not dare . . . Kiss us! . . . Kiss us, I say! . . . Kiss us! . . . All! all! . . . Down to the depth of our soul! . . . [*All four, their eyes full of tears, fall into each other's arms.*]

ACT IV

[*A corridor in front of the room in which the last Act took place.*]

[*Three Servants of the Queen enter. They are all veiled, and their long black robes flow down to the ground.*]

First Servant [*listening at the door*]. They are watching . . .

Second Servant. We need not have waited . . .

Third Servant. She prefers that it should be done in silence . . .

First Servant. I knew that they must fall asleep . . .

Second Servant. Quick! . . . open the door . . .

Third Servant. It is time . . .

First Servant. Wait there . . . I will enter alone. There is no need for three of us . . .

Second Servant. You are right; he is very small . . .

Third Servant. You must be careful with the elder sister . . .

Second Servant. Remember the Queen does not want them to know . . .

First Servant. Have no fear; people seldom hear my coming . . .

Second Servant. Go in then; it is time. [*The*

First Servant opens the door cautiously and goes into the room.] It is close on midnight . . .

Third Servant. Ah! . . . [*A moment's silence. The First Servant comes out of the room.*]

Second Servant. Where is he?

First Servant. He is asleep between his sisters. His arms are around their necks; and their arms enfold him . . . I cannot do it alone . . .

Second Servant. I will help you . . .

Third Servant. Yes; do you go together . . . I will keep watch here . . .

First Servant. Be careful; they seem to know . . . They were all three struggling with a bad dream . . . [*The two Servants go into the room.*]

Third Servant. People always know; but they do not understand . . . [*A moment's silence. The First and Second Servants come out of the room again.*]

Third Servant. Well?

Second Servant. You must come too . . . we cannot separate them . . .

First Servant. No sooner do we unclasp their arms than they fall back around the child . . .

Second Servant. And the child nestles closer and closer to them . . .

First Servant. He is lying with his forehead on the elder sister's heart . . .

Second Servant. And his head rises and falls on her bosom . . .

First Servant. We shall not be able to open his hands . . .

Second Servant. They are plunged deep down into his sisters' hair . . .

First Servant. He holds one golden curl between his little teeth . . .

Second Servant. We shall have to cut the elder sister's hair.

First Servant. And the other sister's too, you will see . . .

Second Servant. Have you your scissors?

Third Servant. Yes . . .

First Servant. Come quickly; they have begun to move . . .

Second Servant. Their hearts and their eyelids are throbbing together . . .

First Servant. Yes; I caught a glimpse of the elder girl's blue eyes . . .

Second Servant. She looked at us but did not see us . . .

First Servant. If one touches one of them, the other two tremble . . .

Second Servant. They are trying hard, but they cannot stir . . .

First Servant. The elder sister wishes to scream, but she cannot . . .

Second Servant. Come quickly; they seem to know . . .

Third Servant. Where is the old man?

First Servant. He is asleep—away from the others . . .

Second Servant. He sleeps, his forehead resting on the hilt of his sword . . .

First Servant. He knows of nothing; and he has no dreams . . .

Third Servant. Come, come, we must hasten . . .

First Servant. You will find it difficult to separate their limbs . . .

Second Servant. They are clutching at each other as though they were drowning.

Third Servant. Come, come . . . . [*They go in. The silence is broken only by sighs and low murmurs of suffering, held in thrall by sleep. Then the three Servants emerge very hurriedly from the gloomy room. One of them carries Tintagiles, who is fast asleep, in her arms. From his little hands, twitching in sleep, and his mouth, drawn in agony, a glittering stream of golden tresses, ravished from the heads of his sisters, flows down to the ground. The Servants hurry on. There is perfect silence; but no sooner have they reached the end of the corridor than Tintagiles awakes, and sends forth a cry of supreme distress.*]

Tintagiles [*from the end of the corridor*]. Aah! . . . [*There is again silence. Then from the adjoining room the two sisters are heard moving about restlessly.*]

Ygraine [*in the room*]. Tintagiles! . . . where is he?

Bellangère. He is not here . . .

Ygraine [*with growing anguish*]. Tintagiles! . . . a lamp, a lamp! . . . Light it!

Bellangère. Yes . . . Yes . . . [*Ygraine is seen coming out of the room with the lighted lamp in her hand.*]

Ygraine. The door is wide open!

The voice of Tintagiles [*almost inaudible in the distance*]. Sister Ygraine!

Ygraine. He calls! . . . He calls! . . . Tintagiles! Tintagiles! . . . [*She rushes into the corridor. Bellangère tries to follow, but falls fainting on the threshold.*]

ACT V

[*Before a great iron door in a gloomy vault.*]

[*Enter Ygraine, haggard and dishevelled, with a lamp in her hand.*]

Ygraine [*turning wildly to and fro*]. They have not followed me! . . . Bellangère! . . . Bellangère! . . . Aglovale! . . . Where are they?—They said they loved him and they leave me alone! . . . Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . . Oh! I remember . . . I have climbed steps without number, between great pitiless walls, and my heart bids me live no longer . . . These vaults seem to move . . . [*She supports herself against the pillars.*] I am falling . . . Oh! oh! my poor life! I can feel it . . . It is trembling on my lips—it wants to depart . . . I know not what I have done . . . I have seen nothing, I have heard nothing . . . Oh, this silence! . . . All along the steps and all along the walls I found these golden curls; and I followed them. I picked them up . . . Oh! oh! they are very pretty! . . . Little childie . . . little childie . . . what was I saying? I remember . . . I do not believe in it . . . When one sleeps . . . All that has no importance and is not possible . . . Of what

am I thinking? . . . I do not know . . . One awakes, and then . . . After all—come, after all—I must think this out . . . Some say one thing, some say the other; but the way of the soul is quite different. When the chain is removed, there is much more than one knows . . . I came here with my little lamp . . . It did not go out, in spite of the wind on the staircase . . . And then, what is one to think? There are so many things which are vague . . . There must be people who know them; but why do they not speak? [*She looks around her.*] I have never seen all this before . . . It is difficult to get so far—and it is all forbidden . . . How cold it is . . . And so dark that one is afraid to breathe . . . They say there is poison in these gloomy shadows . . . That door looks very terrible . . . [*She goes up to the door and touches it.*] Oh! how cold it is . . . It is of iron . . . solid iron—and there is no lock . . . How can they open it? I see no hinges . . . I suppose it is sunk into the wall . . . This is as far as one can go . . . There are no more steps. [*Suddenly sending forth a terrible shriek.*] Ah! . . . more golden hair between the panels! . . . Tintagiles! Tintagiles! . . . I heard the door close just now . . . I remember! I remember! . . . It must be! [*She beats frantically against the door with hands and feet.*] Oh, monster! monster! It is here that I find you! . . . Lis-

ten! I blaspheme! I blaspheme and spit on you! [*Feeble knocks are heard from the other side of the door: then the voice of Tintagiles penetrates very feebly through the iron panels.*]

Tintagiles. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . .

Ygraine. Tintagiles! . . . What! . . . what! . . . Tintagiles, is it you? . . .

Tintagiles. Quick, open, open! . . . She is here! . . .

Ygraine. Oh! oh! . . . Who? Tintagiles, my little Tintagiles . . . can you hear me? . . . What is it? . . . What has happened? . . . Tintagiles! . . . Have they hurt you? . . . Where are you? . . . Are you there? . . .

Tintagiles. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . . Open for me—or I shall die . . .

Ygraine. I will try—wait, wait . . . I will open it, I will open it . . .

Tintagiles. But you do not understand! . . . Sister Ygraine! . . . There is no time to lose! . . . She tried to hold me back! . . . I struck her, struck her . . . I ran . . . Quick, quick, she is coming!

Ygraine. Yes, yes . . . where is she?

Tintagiles. I can see nothing . . . but I hear . . . oh, I am afraid, sister Ygraine, I am afraid . . . Quick, quick! . . . Quick, open! . . . for the dear Lord's sake, sister Ygraine! . . .

Ygraine [*anxiously groping along the door*]. I

am sure to find it . . . Wait a little . . . a minute . . . a second . . .

Tintagiles. I cannot, sister Ygraine . . . I can feel her breath on me now . . .

Ygraine. It is nothing, Tintagiles, my little Tintagiles; do not be frightened . . . if I could only see . . .

Tintagiles. Oh, but you can see—I can see your lamp from here . . . It is quite light where you are, sister Ygraine . . . Here I can see nothing . . .

Ygraine. You see me, Tintagiles? How can you see? There is not a crack in the door . . .

Tintagiles. Yes, yes, there is; but it is so small! . . .

Ygraine. On which side? Is it here? . . . tell me, tell me . . . or is it over there?

Tintagiles. It is here . . . Listen, listen! . . . I am knocking . . .

Ygraine. Here?

Tintagiles. Higher up . . . But it is so small! . . . A needle could not go through! . . .

Ygraine. Do not be afraid, I am here . . .

Tintagiles. Oh, I know, sister Ygraine! . . . Pull! pull! You must pull! She is coming! . . . if you could only open a little . . . a very little . . . I am so small!

Ygraine. My nails are broken, Tintagiles . . . I have pulled, I have pushed, I have struck with all my might—with all my might! [*She strikes again, and tries to shake the massive door.*]

Two of my fingers are numbed . . . Do not cry . . . It is of iron . . .

Tintagiles [*sobbing in despair*]. You have nothing to open with, sister Ygraine? . . . nothing at all, nothing at all? . . . I could get through . . . I am so small, so very small . . . you know how small I am . . .

Ygraine. I have only my lamp, Tintagiles . . . There! there! [*She aims repeated blows at the gate with her earthenware lamp, which goes out and breaks, the pieces falling to the ground.*] Oh! . . . It has all grown dark! . . . Tintagiles, where are you? . . . Oh! listen, listen! . . . Can you not open from the inside? . . .

Tintagiles. No, no; there is nothing . . . I cannot feel anything at all . . . I cannot see the light through the crack any more . . .

Ygraine. What is the matter, Tintagiles? . . . I can scarcely hear you . . .

Tintagiles. Little sister, sister Ygraine . . . It is too late now . . .

Ygraine. What is it, Tintagiles? . . . Where are you going?

Tintagiles. She is here! . . . Oh, I am so weak. Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine . . . I feel her on me! . . .

Ygraine. Whom? . . . whom? . . .

Tintagiles. I do not know . . . I cannot see . . . But it is too late now . . . She . . . she is taking me by the throat . . . Her hand is

at my throat . . . Oh, oh, sister Ygraine, come to me! . . .

Ygraine. Yes, yes . . .

Tintagiles. It is so dark . . .

Ygraine. Struggle—fight—tear her to pieces! . . . Do not be afraid . . . Wait a moment! . . . I am here . . . Tintagiles? . . . Tintagiles! answer me! . . . Help! ! ! . . . where are you? . . . I will come to you . . . kiss me . . . through the door . . . here—here.

Tintagiles [*very feebly*]. Here . . . here . . . sister Ygraine . . .

Ygraine. I am putting my kisses on this spot here, do you understand? Again, again!

Tintagiles [*more and more feebly*]. Mine too—here . . . sister Ygraine! Sister Ygraine! . . . Oh! [*The fall of a little body is heard behind the iron door.*]

Ygraine. Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . . What have you done? . . . Give him back, give him back! . . . for the love of God, give him back to me! . . . I can hear nothing . . . What are you doing with him? . . . You will not hurt him? . . . He is only a little child . . . He cannot resist . . . Look, look! . . . I mean no harm . . . I am on my knees . . . Give him back to us, I beg of you . . . Not for my sake only, you know it well . . . I will do anything . . . I bear no ill-will, you see . . . I implore you with clasped hands . . . I was wrong . . . I am quite resigned, you see . . .

I have lost all I had . . . You should punish me some other way . . . There are so many things which would hurt me more . . . if you want to hurt me . . . You shall see . . . But this poor child has done no harm . . . What I said was not true . . . but I did not know . . . I know that you are very good . . . Surely the time for forgiveness has come! . . . He is so young and beautiful, and he is so small! . . . You must see that it cannot be! . . . He puts his little arms around your neck: his little mouth on your mouth; and God Himself could not say him nay . . . You will open the door, will you not? . . . I am asking so little . . . I want him for an instant, just for an instant . . . I cannot remember . . . You will understand . . . I did not have time . . . He can get through the tiniest opening . . . It is not difficult . . . [*A long inexorable silence.*] . . . Monster! . . . Monster! . . . Curse you! Curse you! . . . I spit on you! [*She sinks down and continues to sob softly, her arms outspread against the gate, in the gloom.*]

ALLADINE AND PALOMIDES

[*Translated by Alfred Sutro.*]

CHARACTERS

ABLAMORE
ASTOLAINE, Ablamore's daughter
ALLADINE
PALOMIDES
THE SISTERS OF PALOMIDES
A DOCTOR

ALLADINE AND PALOMIDES

ACT I

[*A wild spot in the gardens.*]

[*Alladine lies asleep; Ablamore is bending over her.*]

Ablamore. Sleep seems to reign here, day and night, beneath these trees. No sooner have we arrived, she and I, towards eventide, no sooner has she seated herself, than sleep steals over her . . . Alas, I ought to be glad of it! For in the daytime, if I speak to her and our eyes chance to meet, there comes into her eyes a look so hard that she might be a slave whom I had ordered to do a thing that could not be done . . . But that look is not usual with her. Often and often have I watched those beautiful eyes as they rested on children, the forest, the sea, or whatever was near. At me she smiles as we smile at our enemies; and never dare I bend over her save when her eyes can no longer behold me. A few such moments are mine every evening; the rest of the day I live by her side

with my face averted . . . It is sad to love too late . . . Women do not understand that years cannot separate heart from heart. "The wise King" they used to call me. I was wise because, till then, nothing had happened. There are some men from whom events do thus seem to shrink, and turn aside. Nothing would ever take place where I chanced to be . . . I had some suspicion of this in bygone days. There were friends of mine, in my youth, who had only to show themselves for adventures to flock to them; but if I sallied forth in their midst, seeking gladness or sorrow, we would ever return empty handed . . . It is as though I had paralysed destiny; and there was a time when this was a source of much pride to me . . . During my reign, all men have known peace . . . But now I have come to believe that even disaster is better than lethargy, and that there must be a life that is loftier, more stirring, than this constant lying in wait . . . They shall see that I too, when I choose, have the power to stir up the dead water that slumbers in the mighty tarn of the future . . . Alladine, Alladine! . . . Oh how beautiful she is! Her long hair falls on to the flowers, on to her lamb; her mouth is half open, and fresher than the dawn . . . I will kiss her—she shall not know: I will keep back this poor white beard of mine . . . [*he kisses her*] . . . She smiled . . . Why should I be sorry for her? She gives me

a few years of her life, but some day she will reign as queen; and before I wend my way hence, I shall at least have done a little good . . . They will be surprised . . . She herself knows nothing . . . Ah see, she awakes, in alarm. Where do you come from, Alladine?

Alladine. I have had a bad dream.

Ablamore. What is it? Why look you out yonder?

Alladine. Some one has passed by, on the road.

Ablamore. I heard nothing . . .

Alladine. I tell you some one is coming . . . There he is! [*She points to a young cavalier who is advancing towards them through the trees holding his horse by the bridle.*] Do not hold my hand; I am not frightened . . . He has not seen us . . .

Ablamore. Who would dare to come here? . . . If I were not sure . . . I believe it is Palomides . . . He is betrothed to Astolaine . . . See, he raises his head . . . Is it you, Palomides? [*Enter Palomides.*]

Palomides. Yes, my father . . . if I may already call you by that name. I have come before the day and before the hour . . .

Ablamore. You are welcome, whatever the hour . . . But what can have happened? We did not expect you so soon, not for at least two days . . . Has Astolaine come with you?

Palomides. No; she will arrive to-morrow. We have travelled day and night. She was tired;

she begged me to go on before her . . . Are my sisters here?

Ablamore. They came three days ago, and wait for the wedding. You look very happy, Palomides.

Palomides. Who would not be happy, that had found all he sought? There was a time when sorrow weighed on me. But now the days seem lighter to me, and more gentle, than the innocent birds that come and nestle in our hand. And if by chance one of the old moments returns to me, I have but to draw nigh unto Astolaine, and a window would seem to fly open and let in the dawn. Astolaine's soul can be seen; it is there; it takes you in its arms and comforts you, without saying a word, as one comforts a suffering child . . . I shall never understand . . . I know not whence it arises; but my knees bend under me if I only speak of her . . .

Alladine. I want to go in.

Ablamore [*noticing that Alladine and Palomides are looking shyly at each other*]. This is little Alladine, who has come from the depths of Arcady . . . Take each other by the hand . . . You are surprised, Palomides?

Palomides. My father . . . [*His horse makes a brusque movement which startles Alladine's lamb.*]

Ablamore. Be careful; your horse has frightened Alladine's lamb. It will run away.

Alladine. No; it never runs away. It was sur-

prised, that is all. It is a lamb that my godmother gave me . . . It is not like other lambs. It never leaves me, day or night. [*She caresses the lamb.*]

Palomides [*also caressing it*]. It is looking at me with the eyes of a child.

Alladine. It understands everything.

Ablamore. It is time for you to go to your sisters, Palomides. They will be surprised to see you.

Alladine. They have gone to the cross-roads every day. I went with them; but they did not expect so soon—

Ablamore. Come, Palomides is covered with dust and must be tired. We have too much to tell one another, we must not stay here. To-morrow we will talk. The dawn, they say, is wiser than evening. See, the palace gates are open and seem to invite us . . .

Alladine. I cannot tell why it is that uneasiness comes to me, each time I go into the palace. It is so vast and I am so little; I am lost in it . . . And all those windows that look on to the sea . . . You cannot count them . . . And the corridors that wind, and wind, for no reason; and others that do not turn, but that lose themselves in the walls . . . And the rooms I dare not go into—

Palomides. We will go into every one . . .

Alladine. I feel that I was not meant to live there, or that it was not built for me . . .

Once, I lost my way . . . I had to open thirty doors before the daylight returned to me. And I could not escape; the last door led to a lake . . . And there are vaults that are cold even in summer; and galleries that twist, and twist, back on to themselves. And stairs that lead no whither and terraces whence nothing can be seen . . .

Ablamore. How you speak to-night, you who are always so silent . . . [*They go out.*]

ACT II

SCENE I

[*Alladine is discovered, her forehead pressed against one of the windows looking on to the park. Enter Ablamore.*]

Ablamore. Alladine.

Alladine [*turning round quickly*]. Yes.

Ablamore. Oh how pale you look! Are you ill?

Alladine. No.

Ablamore. What were you looking at in the park? At the row of fountains in front of the windows? They are marvellous, indefatigable. They sprang up, one after the other, at the death of each of my daughters . . . At night I can hear them singing in the garden. They recall to me the lives they stand for, and I am able to distinguish their voices . . .

Alladine. I know . . .

Ablamore. You must forgive me; I repeat myself at times; my memory is not quite so faithful . . . It is not because of my age; I am not an old man yet, thank God; but a King has a thousand cares. Palomides has been telling me of his adventures.

Alladine. Ah!

Ablamore. He has not acted in all things as he would have desired to act. Young men are not very strong-willed, nowadays.—I was surprised. There were countless suitors for my daughter's hand; I had chosen him from among them all. She needed a soul that should be no less profound than her own. Nothing that he has done could be called inexcusable, but yet I had hoped for more . . . What impression did he make on you?

Alladine. Who?

Ablamore. Palomides.

Alladine. I have only seen him that one evening . . .

Ablamore. I was astonished.—Hitherto all has gone well with him. He undertook nothing that he did not accomplish successfully, and without many words. He always could overcome danger, with scarcely an effort; while so many others can hardly open a door without finding death crouching behind. He was of those upon whom events seem to wait, on their knees. But of late it appears as though something were broken; as though his star were no longer the same; as though every step that he took dragged him further away from himself. —I know not what it can be.—He himself seems not to suspect it; but to every one else it is clear . . . But enough of all this; see, the night is coming towards us, creeping over the walls. Shall we go together to the wood of

Astolat, where we always spend our evenings?

Alladine. I shall not go out to-night.

Ablamore. We will stay here then, since you prefer it. But the air is tender to-night; the evening is beautiful. [*Alladine trembles, unperceived by him.*] I have had flowers planted along the hedges; I should have liked to have shown them to you . . .

Alladine. No, not to-night . . . I beg of you . . . I like going there with you . . . the air is very pure, and the trees . . . but not to-night . . . [*she bursts into tears, and nestles close to the old man's breast.*] I am not well . . .

Ablamore. Not well? You are falling . . . I will call . . .

Alladine. No, no . . . it is nothing . . . it is over now . . .

Ablamore. Sit down. Wait . . . [*He goes quickly to the door at the back, and throws it wide open. Palomides is behind, seated on a bench that faces the door; he has not had time to turn his eyes away. Ablamore looks fixedly at him, but says not a word; then returns to the room. Palomides rises, and steals away through the corridor, on tiptoe. The lamb goes out of the room, unperceived by the others.*]

Scene II

[*A drawbridge over the palace moat.*]

[*Palomides enters at one end, Alladine at the other, with her lamb by her side. King Ablamore is leaning out of a window in the tower.*]

Palomides. You are going out, Alladine?—I have just returned; I have been hunting . . . There has been a shower . . .

Alladine. I have never yet crossed this bridge.

Palomides. It leads to the forest. People seldom pass over it. They prefer to take another road, which is much longer. I imagine that they are afraid, because the dykes here are deeper than elsewhere; and the black water that pours from the mountain seethes horribly between the walls before it throws itself into the sea. It is always angry, but the quays are so high that one scarcely can see it. This is the most deserted wing of the palace. But the forest is more beautiful this side—older and grander than anything you ever have seen, full of strange trees and flowers that have sprung up of themselves. Will you come?

Alladine. I don't know . . . I am afraid of the angry water.

Palomides. Come—there is no cause for its anger. See, your lamb is looking at me as though it desired to go. Come . . .

Alladine. Do not call, it will break away from me . . .

Palomides. Come with me. Come . . . [*The lamb escapes from Alladine and bounds towards Palomides; but it stumbles on the slope of the drawbridge, misses its footing and falls into the moat.*]

Alladine. Where is it? What has happened?

Palomides. It has fallen into the moat! It is struggling in the whirlpool. Do not look; nothing can be done . . .

Alladine. You will save it?

Palomides. Save it! Alas, it is already drawn under. Yet an instant and it will be below, underneath the vaults; and God Himself will never behold it again . . .

Alladine. Leave me! leave me!

Palomides. What have I done?

Alladine. Leave me! I never want to see you again. [*Ablamore enters abruptly, seizes Alladine and takes her away quickly, without saying a word.*]

Scene III

[*A room in the palace.*]

[*Ablamore and Alladine are discovered together.*]

Ablamore. See, Alladine, my hands are not trembling, and my heart beats as tranquilly as that of a sleeping child, and indeed my voice has never been raised in anger. I do not blame

Palomides, though his conduct may well seem unpardonable. And as for you, why should I blame you? You obey laws that you know not of; nor could you have acted otherwise. I shall say not a word of all that took place, but a few days ago, by the side of the castle moat, or of what the sudden death of the lamb might have revealed to me, had I chosen to believe in omens. But last night I witnessed the kiss you exchanged beneath the windows of Astolaine's room. At that moment I happened to be with her. The one great dread of her soul is lest she disturb the happiness of those about her by a tear, or even a quiver of the eyelid; and thus I never shall know whether she also beheld that miserable kiss. But I do know how deeply she can suffer. I shall ask nothing of you that you cannot confess to me; all I wish you to tell me is whether you obeyed some secret plan when you followed Palomides underneath the window where you must have seen us. Answer me fearlessly; you know I have already forgiven.

Alladine. I did not kiss him.

Ablamore. What! you did not kiss Palomides, or he you?

Alladine. No.

Ablamore. Ah! . . . Listen: I came hither prepared to forgive all that had happened: I said to myself that you had acted as most of us act when our soul holds aloof from us . . .

But now all must be told. You love Palomides: you kissed him before my eyes.

Alladine. No.

Ablamore. Do not run away. I am only an old man. Do not try to escape.

Alladine. I am not trying to escape . . .

Ablamore. Ah! Ah! That is because you imagine these old hands of mine are powerless! There is strength enough in them still to tear out a secret, wheresoever it be. [*He seizes her by the arms.*] There is strength enough in them still to combat those you prefer . . . [*He forces her arms behind her head.*] Ah, you refuse to speak! But the moment will come when the pain will force your soul to rush forth, like clear water . . .

Alladine. No, no!

Ablamore. Again? We are not at the end, then; the road is long; and truth is ashamed, and hides behind the rocks . . . Is it coming? . . . I see it moving in your eyes; I feel its soft breath on my cheek . . . Oh Alladine, Alladine! [*he suddenly releases her*] I heard your bones lament, like little children . . . I have not hurt you? . . . Do not kneel to me—it is I who must go on my knees before you . . . I am a monster . . . Have pity . . . It is not for myself alone that I have besought this of you . . . I have only this one poor daughter . . . The others are dead . . . Once there were seven around me . . . They were beauti-

ful, radiant with joy, I have never seen them again . . . The only one who was left to me was also about to die . . . She had no desire to live . . . Then there was a sudden, unexpected meeting, and I saw she no longer craved for death . . . I ask nothing impossible of you . . . [*Alladine weeps, but makes no answer.*]

Scene IV

[*Astolaine's room.*]

[*Astolaine and Palomides are discovered.*]

Palomides. Astolaine, when it so fell about that I met you, some few months ago, I seemed at least to have found what I had sought for many years. Till then, I had no suspicion of all that real goodness meant, its sweetness and tenderness; I was blind to the perfect simplicity of a truly beautiful soul. And these things stirred me so deeply that it seemed to be the first time in my life that I stood before a human being. I seemed to have spent all my days in an airless chamber; and it was you who flung open the door—and I knew then what other men's souls must be, what my soul, too, might become . . . Since then, I have drawn closer to you. I have seen the things that you did; and others, too, have spoken of you.

There were evenings when I wandered away from you, silently, and sought a secluded spot

in the palace, and could not keep back my tears as I thought of you, and wondered; though you only had raised your eyes, it may be, or made some little unconscious gesture, or smiled, perhaps, for no visible reason, and yet at the very moment that the souls around you craved for this smile, and needed it, for their comfort. You alone know of these moments; for it would seem that your soul contains the soul of each one of us; and I cannot believe that those who have not drawn near to you can tell what the true life may be. And I speak of all this to-day because I feel that I never shall be what I had hoped that I might become . . . Fate has stepped out towards me; or I, it may be, have beckoned to Fate; for we never know whether we ourselves have gone forth or Fate have come seeking us—something has happened whereby my eyes have been opened, at the very moment that we were about to draw unhappiness down on us; and I recognised that there must be a power more incomprehensible than the beauty of the most beautiful face, the most beautiful soul; and mightier too, since I must perforce give way to it . . . I know not whether you understand . . . In that case, pity me . . . I have said to myself all that could be said . . . I know what it is that I lose; I know that her soul is the soul of a child, of a poor and helpless child, by the side

of your soul: and for all that I cannot resist . . .

Astolaine. Do not weep . . . I too am well aware that we are not always able to do the thing we prefer . . . I was not unprepared for your coming . . . There must indeed be laws mightier than those of the soul, whereof we forever are speaking . . . [*she suddenly kisses him*]—But I love you the more for it, my poor Palomides . . .

Palomides. I love you, too . . . more than her whom I love . . . Are you crying, too?

Astolaine. They are little tears . . . let them not sadden you . . . My tears fall because I am a woman; but women's tears, they say, are not painful . . . See, my eyes are already dry . . . I was well aware of it . . . I knew I should soon be awakened . . . And now that it is over I can breathe more freely, for I am no longer happy . . . That is all . . . We must consider what had best be done, for you and for her. I am afraid my father suspects . . . [*They go out.*]

ACT III

Scene I

[*An apartment in the palace.*]

[*Ablamore is discovered. Astolaine is standing on the threshold of a half-opened door at the end of the room.*]

Astolaine. Father, I have come to you in obedience to a voice within me that I can no longer resist. You know all that took place in my soul when I met Palomides. He seemed different from other men . . . To-day I come to you seeking your help . . . for I know not what I had best say to him . . . I have realised that I cannot love . . . It is not he who has changed, but I—or perhaps I did not understand . . . And since it is impossible for me to love the man I had selected from among them all with the love I had dreamed of, it must needs be that these things cannot touch my heart . . . I know it now . . . My eyes shall no longer stray to the paths of love; and you will see me living by your side without sorrow and without disquiet . . . I feel that I am about to be happy.

Ablamore. Come nearer to me, Astolaine. It

was not thus that in days gone by you were wont to speak to your father. You stand there, on the threshold of a half-closed door, as though anxious to fly from me; you keep your hand on the key, as though you desired forever to hide from me the secret of your heart. You know full well that I have not understood what you have said to me; that words have no meaning when soul is not near unto soul. Come closer to me—you need tell me no more. [*Astolaine approaches slowly.*] There comes a moment when soul meets soul; when all is known to them though the lips remained closed . . . Come closer, closer still . . . They are even yet too far apart, these souls of ours—their light is so feeble around us! [*Astolaine suddenly halts.*] You are afraid?—You know how far one may go?—Then it is I will come to you . . . [*He moves slowly towards Astolaine, stands in front of her and gazes fixedly at her.*] I see you, Astolaine . . .

Astolaine. Father! . . . [*She bursts into tears and sobs in the old man's breast.*]

Ablamore. You see how useless it was . . .

Scene II

[*A room in the palace.*]

[*Enter Alladine and Palomides.*]

Palomides. To-morrow all will be ready. We must not wait any longer. He is wandering

like a madman through the palace corridors; I met him but a short time ago. He looked at me, but said nothing; I passed on, but, when I turned round, I saw that he was laughing to himself and flourishing a bunch of keys. When he saw that I was watching him, he nodded, and smiled, and tried to look friendly. He must be nursing some secret scheme—we are in the hands of a master whose reason is tottering. To-morrow we shall be far away. Out yonder there are wonderful countries that are more like your own. Astolaine has already prepared for our flight and for that of my sisters . . .

Alladine. What did she say?

Palomides. Nothing, nothing . . . We shall be on the sea for days, then days of forest—and afterwards we shall come to the lakes and mountains that surround my father's castle; and you will see how different they are from everything here, where the sky is like the roof of a cavern and the black trees are done to death by the storms . . . Ours is a sky beneath which none are afraid; our forests are full of life, and with us the flowers never close . . .

Alladine. Did she cry?

Palomides. Why these questions? . . . That is a thing of which we have no right to speak—do you hear? Her life has nothing in common with our poor life; love must perforce be silent before it dare approach her . . . When I think of her, we seem to be beggars, you and

I, and clothed in rags . . . Leave me, leave me! . . . For I could say things to you . . .

Alladine. Palomides! . . . What has happened?

Palomides. Go, go . . . I saw tears that came not from the eyes, but from far beyond . . . For there are other things . . . And yet we are right, perhaps; but oh God, if that be so how sorry I am to be right! . . . Go, go . . . I will tell you to-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow . . . [*They go out by different ways.*]

Scene III

[*A corridor in front of Alladine's room.*]

[*Enter Astolaine and the Sisters of Palomides.*]

Astolaine. The horses are waiting in the forest, but Palomides refuses to fly, although your lives are in peril as well as his own. I no longer recognise my poor father. He has a fixed idea which unhinges his reason. I have been following him, the last three days, step by step, crouching behind walls and pillars, for he will suffer no one to accompany him. To-day, with the first rays of dawn, he again set forth and wandered through the rooms of the palace, and the corridors, and along the moat and the ramparts, waving the great golden keys he has had made, and chanting loudly the strange song whose refrain, "Go where your eyes may lead," may perhaps have reached you even in your rooms.

Hitherto I have told you nothing of all this, for these are things whereof one should not speak without cause. He must have confined Alladine in this room, but no one knows what he has done to her. I have watched every night and run to the door, and listened, the moment he had turned away, but I have heard not a sound in the room . . . Can you hear anything?

One of the Sisters of Palomides. Only the murmur of the air as it passes through the crevice in the wall . . .

Another Sister. When I listen I seem only to hear the great pendulum, as it swings to and fro . . .

A Third Sister. But who is this little Alladine, and why is he so angry with her?

Astolaine. She is a little Greek slave, who has come from the depths of Arcady . . . He is not angry with her, but . . . Hark, there he is. [*Some one is heard singing in the distance.*] Hide behind these pillars. He has given orders that no one should pass along this corridor. [*They hide. Ablamore comes in, singing, and flourishing a great bunch of keys.*]

Ablamore [*sings*].

Unhappiness had three keys of gold
—But the queen is not yet freed—
Unhappiness had three keys of gold
Go where your eyes may lead.

[*He seems terribly weary and lets himself fall on to the bench that faces Alladine's room; for some little time still he murmurs his song, then falls asleep, his hands hanging down by his side and his head sinking on to his shoulder.*]

Astolaine. Come; and make no noise. He has fallen asleep on the bench. Oh my poor father! How white his hair has grown these last few days! He is so unhappy, so weak, that even sleep can bring no comfort to him. For three whole days I have not dared look into his face . . .

One of the Sisters of Palomides. He sleeps profoundly . . .

Astolaine. Yes; but one can see that his soul is not at rest . . . The sun is beating down on his eyes . . . I will draw his cloak over his face . . .

Another Sister. No, no, do not touch him; you might startle him, wake him.

Astolaine. There is some one coming along the corridor . . . Do you stand in front of him, and hide him . . . It would not be right that a stranger should behold him thus . . .

One of the Sisters. It is Palomides . . .

Astolaine. I will cover up those poor eyes . . . [*She spreads the cloak over Ablamore's face.*] Palomides must not see him like this . . . He is too unhappy . . . [*Enter Palomides.*]

Palomides. What has happened?

One of the Sisters. He has fallen asleep on the bench.

Palomides. He could not see me, but I have been following him . . . He has said nothing?

Astolaine. No; but see how he has suffered . . .

Palomides. Has he the keys?

Another Sister. He is holding them in his hand.

Palomides. I will take them from him.

Astolaine. What do you mean to do? Oh be careful—do not wake him. For three nights now he has been roaming through the palace . . .

Palomides. I will unclasp his hand gently—he will not feel it. We dare not wait any longer. God alone can tell what he has done! He will forgive us when his reason returns . . . Oh! how weak his hands are!

Astolaine. Be careful—oh be careful!

Palomides. I have the keys—which one is it? I will open the door.

One of the Sisters. I am frightened—do not open it yet . . . Palomides . . .

Palomides. Stay here . . . I know not what I shall find . . . [*He goes to the door, opens it, and enters the room.*]

Astolaine. Is she there?

Palomides [*from within the room*]. I can see nothing—the shutters are closed . . .

Astolaine. Be careful, Palomides . . . Let me go first . . . Your voice is trembling . . .

Palomides. No, no . . . a ray of sunlight is

stealing through the chinks of the shutters . . .

One of the Sisters. Yes—the sun is shining brightly outside.

Palomides [*suddenly emerging from the room*]. Come, quickly!—I believe that she . . .

Astolaine. You have seen her? . . .

Palomides. She is lying on the bed . . . She does not move . . . I do not think that— . . . Come in! [*They all enter the room.*]

Astolaine and the Sisters of Palomides [*inside the room*]. Here she is . . . No, no, she is not dead . . . Alladine, Alladine! Oh, poor child . . . Do not scream . . . She has fainted . . . They have tied her hair round her mouth . . . and fastened her hands behind her . . . they are fastened with her hair . . . Alladine, Alladine! . . . Quick, get some water . . . [*Ablamore has awakened and appears on the threshold.*]

Astolaine. My father is there!

Ablamore [*going up to Palomides*]. Was it you who opened the door of this room?

Palomides. Yes, I—I did it—and then—and then? . . . I cannot let her die before my eyes . . . See what you have done . . . Alladine! Be not afraid . . . She is opening her eyes . . . I will not endure . . .

Ablamore. Do not speak so loudly . . . Come, let us open the shutters . . . We cannot see, in here . . . Alladine . . . Ah, she has already got up . . . Come you too, Alladine

. . . Look, my children, how dark it is in the room. As dark as though we were thousands of feet underground. But I have only to open a shutter, and see! All the light of the sky, all the light of the sun! . . . It calls for no mighty effort—the light is eager enough . . . We have only to call—it will never fail to obey . . . Do you see the river out yonder, with the islands in its midst, all covered with flowers? The sky to-day might be a ring of crystal . . . Alladine, Palomides, look . . . Come nigh unto heaven, both of you . . . Kiss each other, with this new light upon you . . . I bear you no ill-will. You have done what was ordained; and so have I too . . . Lean for one instant out of this open window; look once again at the trees and the flowers . . . [*A silence. He quietly closes the shutters.*]

ACT IV

[*Vast subterranean grottoes.*]

[*Alladine and Palomides are discovered.*]

Palomides. They have bandaged my eyes and bound my hands . . .

Alladine. My hands are bound too, my eyes are bandaged . . . I believe my hands are bleeding . . .

Palomides. Wait, wait. Oh how grateful I am to-day for my strength . . . I feel that the knots are giving . . . I will try once more, though I burst every vein . . . Once more still —ah, my hands are free! [*he tears off the bandage*] and my eyes too!

Alladine. You can see?

Palomides. Yes.

Alladine. Where are we?

Palomides. I cannot see you . . .

Alladine. I am here, here . . .

Palomides. The tears still stream down my eyes from the effects of the bandage . . . We are not in darkness . . . Is it you that I hear, out yonder, close to the light?

Alladine. I am here, come to me . . .

Palomides. You are on the edge of the light. Do

not move; I cannot tell what there is all around you. My eyes still remember the bandage. They drew it so tight that my eyelids have nigh burst in twain.

Alladine. Come quickly, the cords suffocate me. I can wait no longer . . .

Palomides. I hear only a voice that comes forth from the light . . .

Alladine. Where are you?

Palomides. I know not . . . I am still groping in darkness . . . Speak again, that I may know where to look for you . . . You seem to be in the midst of infinite radiance . . .

Alladine. Come to me, oh come! I have suffered in silence but now can endure it no longer . . .

Palomides [*feeling his way along*]. Is that you? I thought you so far away! My tears had deceived me. But now I am here and can see you. Oh, your hands are wounded! The blood has dropped down from them on to your dress: the cords have sunk into your flesh. And I have nothing to cut them with—they have taken away my dagger. I must tear them off. Wait, wait—I have found the knots.

Alladine. First take off this bandage which blinds me.

Palomides. I cannot . . . I am dazzled . . . I seem to be caught in the midst of innumerable threads of gold . . .

Alladine. My hands, then, my hands!

Palomides. The cords are of silk . . . Wait, the knots are giving. They have wound the cord around thirty times . . . There, there!—Oh how your hands are bleeding! . . . They look as though they were dead . . .

Alladine. No, no, they live, they live! See! . . . [*No sooner are her hands freed than she flings them around Palomides' neck and embraces him passionately.*]

Palomides. Alladine!

Alladine. Palomides!

Palomides. Alladine, Alladine! . . .

Alladine. I am happy now . . . I have waited so long! . . .

Palomides. I was afraid to come . . .

Alladine. I am happy . . . I want to see you . . .

Palomides. They have fastened the bandage so tight that it might be a helmet of steel . . . Do not move; I have found the gold threads . . .

Alladine. Yes, yes, I will move . . . [*She throws her arms round him, and kisses him again.*]

Palomides. Be careful. Do not turn round. I am afraid of hurting you . . .

Alladine. Tear it off! Do not mind. There is nothing can hurt me now . . .

Palomides. I too want to see you . . .

Alladine. Tear it off, tear it off! I am far beyond reach of pain! . . . Tear it off! You

do not know how gladly I would die . . . Where are we?

Palomides. You will see, you will see . . . We are in the midst of innumerable grottoes . . . there are great blue caverns, with shining pillars, and lofty arches . . .

Alladine. Why do you answer when I speak to you?

Palomides. I care not where we are so we be but together . . .

Alladine. Already you love me less . . .

Palomides. What do you mean?

Alladine. Do I need to be told where I am, when it is on your heart that I lie? . . . I beseech you, tear off the bandage! . . . It shall not be like one who is blind that I enter your soul . . . What are you doing, Palomides? You do not laugh when I laugh, or cry when I cry. You do not clap your hands when I clap mine; you do not tremble when I speak and tremble in the depths of my heart . . . The bandage, the bandage! . . . I want to see! . . . Tear it off, pull it over my hair! [*she tears off the bandage*]. Oh! . . .

Palomides. You can see?

Alladine. Yes, I see you . . . and only you . . .

Palomides. What is it, Alladine? Why are your kisses already so sorrowful?

Alladine. Where are we?

Palomides. Why do you ask that so sadly?

Alladine. I am not sad, but I scarcely can open my eyes . . .

Palomides. I feel as though your joy had fallen on my lips as a child might fall on the threshold of its father's house . . . Do not turn from me . . . I am afraid of your leaving me, afraid lest this all be a dream . . .

Alladine. Where are we?

Palomides. In the midst of caverns I never have seen . . . Does it not seem as though more light were coming towards us?—When I opened my eyes all was dark; now, little by little, all seems to be clear to me. I have often heard of the marvellous caverns that lay beneath Ablamore's palace; these must be they. No one ever went into them; and only the King had the keys. I knew that the sea flooded those that lay deepest; and the light we behold is doubtless thrown up by the sea . . . They thought they were burying us in darkness. They came hither with lanterns and torches, and saw only blackness; but the light comes to us who have nothing . . . It grows brighter and brighter . . . It must be the dawn that is piercing the ocean, and sending us, through the green waves, all the purity of its innocent soul . . .

Alladine. How long have we been here?

Palomides. I cannot tell . . . I had made no effort until I heard your voice . . .

Alladine. I know not how it all happened. I was

asleep in the room where you had found me; when I awoke my eyes were bound and my two hands tied to my belt . . .

Palomides. I too was asleep . . . I heard nothing, and before I could open my eyes the bandage was over them. I struggled fiercely, in the darkness, but they were stronger than I . . . They must have led me through deep-lying vaults, for I could feel the cold dripping on to my shoulders; I went down and down so long that I could not keep count of the steps . . . They said nothing to you?

Alladine. Not a word. But I could hear that some one was weeping as he walked by my side; and then I fainted . . .

Palomides [*kissing her*]. Alladine!

Alladine. How gravely you kiss me . . .

Palomides. Do not close your eyes when I kiss you . . . I want to look into your heart and see my kisses quivering there, and the dew that steals up from your soul . . . never again shall we know such kisses as these . . .

Alladine. Always, always!

Palomides. Not so; for our lips meet now over the bosom of death; and that can happen but once . . . Oh, you are beautiful thus! . . . It is the first time that I have been near to you, that I have looked into your eyes . . . It is strange; people pass by each other and think they have seen; yet how does everything change the moment the lips have met . . . There; do

as you will . . . I stretch out my arms to admire you as though you no longer were mine; then I bring them together until I again meet your kiss, and I see only joy everlasting . . . We needed this unearthly light! . . . [*He kisses her again.*] Ah! what have you done? Be careful; we are on the crest of a rock that hangs over the light-giving water. Do not move. It was time . . . Do not turn round too quickly. I was dazzled . . .

Alladine [*turning and looking at the blue water whence the light is thrown up*]. Oh! . . .

Palomides. It seems as though the sky itself were flowing towards us . . .

Alladine. It is full of motionless flowers . . .

Palomides. Full of strange and motionless flowers . . . See, there is one out yonder, larger than all the others, that shoots out its petals beneath them . . . One can almost hear the rhythmic beat of its life . . . And the water, if water it be, seems bluer, more beautiful, purer than all the waters of earth . . .

Alladine. I am afraid to look any longer . . .

Palomides. See how the light now shines over all . . . The light dare no longer waver: and in the vestibule of heaven do we kiss one another . . . Look at the jewels in the roof: they are drunk with life, they seem to smile on us; look at the myriad roses, of deep glowing blue, that twine themselves all round the pillars . . .

Alladine. Oh! . . . I heard! . . .

Palomides. What?

Alladine. I heard some one striking the rocks . . .

Palomides. No, no; it is only the golden gates of an unknown heaven that are flung open wide in our soul, and sing as they turn on their hinges! . . .

Alladine. Listen . . . again, again! . . .

Palomides [*with a sudden change of voice*]. Yes; it is out yonder . . . beneath the vault that is bluest of all . . .

Alladine. They are coming to . . .

Palomides. I hear the iron striking the rock . . . They walled up the door, perhaps, or are unable to open it . . . The axes crunch on the stone . . . His soul has whispered to him that we were happy . . . [*A silence; then a stone falls away from the extreme end of the roof, and a ray of daylight breaks into the cavern.*]

Alladine. Oh! . . .

Palomides. This light is different . . . [*They stand there, motionless, anxiously watching stone after stone as it slides slowly away and falls to the ground, beneath a light that can scarcely be borne; a light that streams into the cavern with ever more resistless abundance, revealing little by little the wretchedness of the grotto that had seemed so marvellous to them; the miraculous lake becomes dull and sinister; the light fades out of the stones in the rocks, and the ardent roses are seen to be nothing but fungus and decaying matter. At last a whole*

side of the rock falls bodily into the grotto. The sun streams in, overwhelming all. Shouts and cries are heard from without. Alladine and Palomides draw back.]

Palomides. Where are we?

Alladine [*embracing him sadly*]. And yet do I love you, Palomides . . .

Palomides. I love you too, my Alladine . . .

Alladine. They are coming . . .

Palomides [*looking behind him as they retreat still further*]. Take care . . .

Alladine. No, no, we need no longer take care . . .

Palomides [*looking at her*]. Alladine? . . .

Alladine. Yes. [*They retreat further and further before the invasion of light or danger, until at length they lose their footing; they fall, and disappear behind the rock that overhangs the subterranean water, now all enwrapped in gloom. There is a moment's silence; then Astolaine and the sisters of Palomides enter the grotto.*]

Astolaine. Where are they?

One of Palomides' Sisters. Palomides!

Astolaine. Alladine, Alladine!

Another Sister. Palomides! We are here!

A Third Sister. Fear nothing; we are alone!

Astolaine. Come to us; we are here to save you!

A Fourth Sister. Ablamore has fled . . .

A Fifth Sister. He is no longer in the palace . . .

A Sixth Sister. They do not answer . . .

Astolaine. I heard a movement in the water—this way, this way! [*They rush to the rock that hangs over the subterranean water.*]

One of the Sisters. There they are!

Another Sister. Yes, yes, at the bottom of the black water . . . They are lying in each other's arms . . .

A Third Sister. They are dead!

A Fourth Sister. No, no, they live, they live . . . Look . . .

The Other Sisters. Help! Help! Call for help!

Astolaine. They make no effort to save themselves . . .

ACT V

[*A corridor.*]

[*It is so long that the last arches seem to be lost in a kind of inner horizon. Innumerable doors, all of them closed, are seen on both sides of the corridor; the sisters of Palomides stand before one of these, over which they seem to keep guard. A little further, on the opposite side, Astolaine stands, speaking to the doctor, in front of a door which is also closed.*]

Astolaine [*to the doctor*]. Hitherto nothing had happened, in this palace, where all seemed to have been steeped in slumber since the death of my sisters; then a strange unreasoning restlessness seized hold of my poor father—he began to chafe under this tranquillity that yet would seem to be the least dangerous form of happiness. Some time ago—his reason must have already been shaken—he climbed to the top of the tower, and stretched both his arms out, timidly, towards mountain and sea; and said to me—with a diffident smile, for he saw that I looked incredulous—that he was summoning to us the events that too long had remained concealed in the horizon. Alas, the

events have come: more quickly, more numerous too, than he had expected; and it has needed a few days only for them to dethrone him and reign in his stead. He was the first of their victims. He fled to the meadows, singing and weeping, the night he had caused little Alladine and ill-fated Palomides to be entombed in the grotto. And since then no one has seen him. I have sent men in search of him all over the country, and even on to the sea. They have found not a trace of him. But at least I had hoped to save those on whom he had unconsciously brought this suffering, he who always had been the tenderest of men and the best of fathers; but here too I fear I have come too late. I know nothing of what took place. So far they have said not a word. It appears that they thought, when they heard the iron crushing the stone and the light streamed into the cave, that my father regretted the respite he had accorded and that they who approached brought death. Or it may be that they lost their footing as they retreated along the rock which hangs over the lake, and fell in by accident. But the water there is not deep; and we had no difficulty in saving them. At present it is you, and you only, on whom all depends . . . [*The sisters of Palomides have drawn near to them.*]

The Doctor. They are suffering both from the same disease, and it is one that I know not.—But I have little hope. It may be that the chill

of that underground water has seized hold of them; or the water itself perhaps may be poisonous. The decomposed body of Alladine's lamb has been found there.—I will come again this evening. In the meantime, they need silence . . . Life has ebbed very low in their heart . . . Do not enter their rooms, or speak to them; for in their present state the least word may be fatal . . . They must try to forget one another . . . [*He goes.*]

One of Palomides' Sisters. I can see that he is going to die . . .

Astolaine. No, no . . . do not weep . . . at his age death does not come so quickly . . .

Another Sister. Why was your father so angry with our poor brother? He had no cause . . .

The Third Sister. I believe your father must have loved Alladine . . .

Astolaine. Do not speak of him thus . . . He thought I was unhappy. He imagined he was doing right, and did wrong without knowing it . . . That happens often to us all . . . I remember now . . . One night I was asleep; and wept in my dream . . . We have so little courage when we dream . . . I awoke; he was standing by my bedside, looking at me . . . And he misunderstood, perhaps . . .

The Fourth Sister [*hurrying towards them*]. I heard Alladine move in her room . . .

Astolaine. Go to the door; listen—it is perhaps only the nurse . . .

The Fifth Sister. No, no; I can hear the nurse's footsteps . . . This noise is different . . .

The Sixth Sister. I believe Palomides has moved too . . . I seemed to hear a voice that was striving to speak.

The Voice of Alladine [*very feebly, from within the room*]. Palomides! . . .

One of the Sisters. She is calling to him! . . .

Astolaine. We must take care! . . . Go, stand in front of the door, so that Palomides may not hear . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Palomides! . . .

Astolaine. O God, O God, silence that voice! If Palomides hears it, he will die! . . .

The Voice of Palomides [*very feebly, from within another room*]. Alladine! . . .

One of the Sisters. He is answering! . . .

Astolaine. Do three of you stay here; the rest of us will go to the other door. Come, we must hasten—we will surround them, try to protect them . . . Lie right against the panels—perhaps they will not hear . . .

One of the Sisters. I will go in to Alladine . . .

The Second Sister. Yes, yes; prevent her from calling again . . .

The Third Sister. It is she who has caused all this sorrow . . .

Astolaine. You shall not go in; or if you do then will I go to Palomides. She had the same right to live as the rest of us, and she has done nothing more . . . But to be unable to stifle

these death-dealing words as they pass by us! . . . We can do nothing, my sisters, my poor sisters, we can do nothing; and the hand cannot stay the soul! . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Palomides—is that you?

The Voice of Palomides. Where are you, Alladine?

The Voice of Alladine. Is it you that I hear moaning, far away from me?

The Voice of Palomides. Is it you that I have heard calling me?—I cannot see you . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Your voice seems to have lost all hope . . .

The Voice of Palomides. Yours seems already to have passed through death . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Your voice scarcely reaches my room . . .

The Voice of Palomides. Nor does yours sound to me as it used to sound . . .

The Voice of Alladine. I had pity on you! . . .

The Voice of Palomides. They have parted us, but I always shall love you . . .

The Voice of Alladine. I had pity on you . . . are you suffering still?

The Voice of Palomides. I suffer no more, but I want to see you . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Never again shall we see one another, for the doors are all closed . . .

The Voice of Palomides. There is that in your voice that tells me you love me no longer . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Yes, yes, I love you still, but now all is sorrow . . .

The Voice of Palomides. You are turning away . . . I scarcely can hear you . . .

The Voice of Alladine. We seem to be hundreds of miles from each other . . .

The Voice of Palomides. I have tried to rise, but my soul is too heavy . . .

The Voice of Alladine. I have tried, too, but my head fell back . . .

The Voice of Palomides. As I listen I seem to hear your tears fall . . .

The Voice of Alladine. No; for a long time I wept; but now these are no longer tears . . .

The Voice of Palomides. You are thinking of something that you will not tell me . . .

The Voice of Alladine. They were not jewels . . .

The Voice of Palomides. And the flowers were not real . . .

One of Palomides' Sisters. They are delirious . . .

Astolaine. No, no; they are well aware of what they are saying . . .

The Voice of Alladine. It was the light that had no pity . . .

The Voice of Palomides. Whither go you, Alladine? You seem to be further and further away from me . . .

The Voice of Alladine. I no longer regret the rays of the sun . . .

The Voice of Palomides. Yes, yes, we shall again behold the trees and the flowers! . . .

The Voice of Alladine. I have lost the desire to live . . . [*A silence; then more and more feebly.*]

The Voice of Palomides. Alladine! . . .

The Voice of Alladine. Palomides! . . .

The Voice of Palomides. Alla—dine . . . [*A silence. Astolaine and the sisters of Palomides are listening in intense anguish. Then the nurse throws open the door of Palomides' room from within, appears on the threshold, and beckons to them; they all follow her into the room and close the door. Once more there is silence. Then the door of Alladine's room opens; the other nurse comes out and looks about her in the corridor; seeing no one she goes back into the room, leaving the door wide open.*]

INTERIOR

[*Translated by William Archer.*]

CHARACTERS

In the Garden—

THE OLD MAN
THE STRANGER
MARTHA, MARY } Granddaughters of the Old Man
A PEASANT
THE CROWD

In the House—

THE FATHER
THE MOTHER
THE TWO DAUGHTERS } Silent personages
THE CHILD

The interval that elapses between the occurrence of a disaster and the breaking of the news to the bereaved is one full of tragedy; and here the pathetic ignorance of the drowned girl's family and the painful knowledge of the reluctant bearers of the evil tidings provide material for a touching little play—slight material to all appearance, but in the hands of M. Maeterlinck sufficient for the display of a wealth of kindly wisdom and sympathetic knowledge of human nature.

INTERIOR

[*An old garden planted with willows.*]

[*At the back, a house, with three of the ground-floor windows lighted up. Through them a family is pretty distinctly visible, gathered for the evening round the lamp. The Father is seated at the chimney corner. The Mother, resting one elbow on the table, is gazing into vacancy. Two young girls, dressed in white, sit at their embroidery, dreaming and smiling in the tranquillity of the room. A child is asleep, his head resting on his mother's left arm. When one of them rises, walks, or makes a gesture, the movements appear grave, slow, apart, and as though spiritualised by the distance, the light, and the transparent film of the window-panes.*]

[*The Old Man and the Stranger enter the garden cautiously.*]

The Old Man. Here we are in the part of the garden that lies behind the house. They never come here. The doors are on the other side. They are closed and the shutters shut. But there are no shutters on this side of the house, and I saw the light . . . Yes, they are still sitting up in the lamplight. It is well that they have not heard us; the mother or the girls would

perhaps have come out, and then what should we have done?

The Stranger. What are we going to do?

The Old Man. I want first to see if they are all in the room. Yes, I see the father seated at the chimney corner. He is doing nothing, his hands resting on his knees. The mother is leaning her elbow on the table . . .

The Stranger. She is looking at us.

The Old Man. No, she is looking at nothing; her eyes are fixed. She cannot see us; we are in the shadow of the great trees. But do not go any nearer . . . There, too, are the dead girl's two sisters; they are embroidering slowly. And the little child has fallen asleep. It is nine on the clock in the corner . . . They divine no evil, and they do not speak.

The Stranger. If we were to attract the father's attention, and make some sign to him? He has turned his head this way. Shall I knock at one of the windows? One of them will have to hear of it before the others . . .

The Old Man. I do not know which to choose . . . We must be very careful. The father is old and ailing—the mother too—and the sisters are too young . . . And they all loved her as they will never love again. I have never seen a happier household . . . No, no! do not go up to the window; that would be the worst thing we could do. It is better that we should tell them of it as simply as we can, as though it

were a commonplace occurrence; and we must not appear too sad, else they will feel that their sorrow must exceed ours, and they will not know what to do . . . Let us go round to the other side of the garden. We will knock at the door, and go in as if nothing had happened. I will go in first: they will not be surprised to see me; I sometimes look in of an evening, to bring them some flowers or fruit, and to pass an hour or two with them.

The Stranger. Why do you want me to go with you? Go alone; I will wait until you call me. They have never seen me—I am only a passer-by, a stranger . . .

The Old Man. It is better that I should not be alone. A misfortune announced by a single voice seems more definite and crushing. I thought of that as I came along . . . If I go in alone, I shall have to speak at the very first moment; they will know all in a few words; I shall have nothing more to say; and I dread the silence which follows the last words that tell of a misfortune. It is then that the heart is torn. If we enter together, I shall go round-about to work; I shall tell them, for example: "They found her thus, or thus . . . She was floating on the stream, and her hands were clasped . . ."

The Stranger. Her hands were not clasped; her arms were floating at her sides.

The Old Man. You see, in spite of ourselves we

begin to talk—and the misfortune is shrouded in its details. Otherwise, if I go in alone, I know them well enough to be sure that the very first words would produce a terrible effect, and God knows what would happen. But if we speak to them in turns, they will listen to us, and will forget to look the evil tidings in the face. Do not forget that the mother will be there, and that her life hangs by a thread . . . It is well that the first wave of sorrow should waste its strength in unnecessary words. It is wisest to let people gather round the unfortunate and talk as they will. Even the most indifferent carry off, without knowing it, some portion of the sorrow. It is dispersed without effort and without noise, like air or light . . .

The Stranger. Your clothes are soaked and are dripping on the flagstones.

The Old Man. It is only the skirt of my mantle that has trailed a little in the water. You seem to be cold. Your coat is all muddy . . . I did not notice it on the way, it was so dark.

The Stranger. I went into the water up to my waist.

The Old Man. Had you found her long when I came up?

The Stranger. Only a few moments. I was going towards the village; it was already late, and the dusk was falling on the river bank. I was walking along with my eyes fixed on the river, because it was lighter than the road, when I saw

something strange close by a tuft of reeds . . . I drew nearer, and I saw her hair, which had floated up almost into a circle round her head, and was swaying hither and thither with the current . . . [*In the room, the two young girls turn their heads towards the window.*]

The Old Man. Did you see her two sisters' hair trembling on their shoulders?

The Stranger. They turned their heads in our direction—they simply turned their heads. Perhaps I was speaking too loudly. [*The two girls resume their former position.*] They have turned away again already . . . I went into the water up to my waist, and then I managed to grasp her hand and easily drew her to the bank. She was as beautiful as her sisters . . .

The Old Man. I think she was more beautiful . . . I do not know why I have lost all my courage . . .

The Stranger. What courage do you mean? We did all that man could do. She had been dead for more than an hour.

The Old Man. She was living this morning! I met her coming out of the church. She told me that she was going away; she was going to see her grandmother on the other side of the river in which you found her. She did not know when I should see her again . . . She seemed to be on the point of asking me something; then I suppose she did not dare, and she left me abruptly. But now that I think of it—and I

noticed nothing at the time!—she smiled as people smile who want to be silent, or who fear that they will not be understood . . . Even hope seemed like a pain to her; her eyes were veiled, and she scarcely looked at me.

The Stranger. Some peasants told me that they saw her wandering all the afternoon on the bank. They thought she was looking for flowers . . . It is possible that her death . . .

The Old Man. No one can tell . . . What can any one know? She was perhaps one of those who shrink from speech, and every one bears in his breast more than one reason for ceasing to live. You cannot see into the soul as you see into that room. They are all like that—they say nothing but trivial things, and no one dreams that there is aught amiss. You live for months by the side of one who is no longer of this world, and whose soul cannot stoop to it; you answer her unthinkingly; and you see what happens. They look like lifeless puppets, and all the time so many things are passing in their souls. They do not themselves know what they are. She might have lived as the others live. She might have said to the day of her death: "Sir, or Madam, it will rain this morning," or, "We are going to lunch; we shall be thirteen at table," or "The fruit is not yet ripe." They speak smilingly of the flowers that have fallen, and they weep in the darkness. An angel from heaven would not see what ought to be seen;

and men understand nothing until after all is over . . . Yesterday evening she was there, sitting in the lamplight like her sisters; and you would not see them now as they ought to be seen if this had not happened . . . I seem to see her for the first time . . . Something new must come into our ordinary life before we can understand it. They are at your side day and night; and you do not really see them until the moment when they depart for ever. And yet, what a strange little soul she must have had—what a poor little, artless, unfathomable soul she must have had—to have said what she must have said, and done what she must have done!

The Stranger. See, they are smiling in the silence of the room . . .

The Old Man. They are not at all anxious—they did not expect her this evening.

The Stranger. They sit motionless and smiling. But see, the father puts his fingers to his lips . . .

The Old Man. He points to the child asleep on its mother's breast . . .

The Stranger. She dares not raise her head for fear of disturbing it . . .

The Old Man. They are not sewing any more. There is a dead silence . . .

The Stranger. They have let fall their skein of white silk . . .

The Old Man. They are looking at the child . . .

The Stranger. They do not know that others are looking at them . . .

The Old Man. We, too, are watched . . .

The Stranger. They have raised their eyes . . .

The Old Man. And yet they can see nothing . . .

The Stranger. They seem to be happy, and yet there is something—I cannot tell what . . .

The Old Man. They think themselves beyond the reach of danger. They have closed the doors, and the windows are barred with iron. They have strengthened the walls of the old house; they have shot the bolts of the three oaken doors. They have foreseen everything that can be foreseen . . .

The Stranger. Sooner or later we must tell them. Some one might come in and blurt it out abruptly. There was a crowd of peasants in the meadow where we left the dead girl—if one of them were to come and knock at the door . . .

The Old Man. Martha and Mary are watching the little body. The peasants were going to make a litter of branches; and I told my eldest granddaughter to hurry on and let us know the moment they made a start. Let us wait till she comes; she will go with me . . . I wish we had not been able to watch them in this way. I thought there was nothing to do but to knock at the door, to enter quite simply, and to tell all in a few phrases . . . But I have watched them too long, living in the lamplight . . . [*Enter Mary.*]

Mary. They are coming, grandfather.
The Old Man. Is that you? Where are they?
Mary. They are at the foot of the last slope.
The Old Man. They are coming silently.
Mary. I told them to pray in a low voice. Martha is with them.
The Old Man. Are there many of them?
Mary. The whole village is around the bier. They had brought lanterns; I bade them put them out.
The Old Man. What way are they coming?
Mary. They are coming by the little paths. They are moving slowly.
The Old Man. It is time . . .
Mary. Have you told them, grandfather?
The Old Man. You can see that we have told them nothing. There they are, still sitting in the lamplight. Look, my child, look: you will see what life is . . .
Mary. Oh! how peaceful they seem! I feel as though I were seeing them in a dream.
The Stranger. Look there—I saw the two sisters give a start.
The Old Man. They are rising . . .
The Stranger. I believe they are coming to the windows. [*At this moment one of the two sisters comes up to the first window, the other to the third; and resting their hands against the panes they stand gazing into the darkness.*]
The Old Man. No one comes to the middle window.

Mary. They are looking out; they are listening . . .

The Old Man. The elder is smiling at what she does not see.

The Stranger. The eyes of the second are full of fear.

The Old Man. Take care: who knows how far the soul may extend around the body . . . [*A long silence. Mary nestles close to the old man's breast and kisses him.*]

Mary. Grandfather!

The Old Man. Do not weep, my child; our turn will come. [*A pause.*]

The Stranger. They are looking long . . .

The Old Man. Poor things, they would see nothing though they looked for a hundred thousand years—the night is too dark. They are looking this way; and it is from the other side that misfortune is coming.

The Stranger. It is well that they are looking this way. Something, I do not know what, is approaching by way of the meadows.

Mary. I think it is the crowd; they are too far off for us to see clearly.

The Stranger. They are following the windings of the path—there they come in sight again on that moonlit slope.

Mary. Oh! how many they seem to be. Even when I left, people were coming up from the outskirts of the town. They are taking a very roundabout way . . .

The Old Man. They will arrive at last, none the less. I see them, too—they are crossing the meadows—they look so small that one can scarcely distinguish them among the herbage. You might think them children playing in the moonlight; if the girls saw them they would not understand. Turn their backs to it as they may, misfortune is approaching step by step, and has been looming larger for more than two hours past. They cannot bid it stay; and those who are bringing it are powerless to stop it. It has mastered them, too, and they must needs serve it. It knows its goal, and it takes its course. It is unwearying, and it has but one idea. They have to lend it their strength. They are sad, but they draw nearer. Their hearts are full of pity, but they must advance . . .

Mary. The elder has ceased to smile, grandfather.

The Stranger. They are leaving the windows . . .

Mary. They are kissing their mother . . .

The Stranger. The elder is stroking the child's curls without wakening it.

Mary. Ah! the father wants them to kiss him, too . . .

The Stranger. Now there is silence . . .

Mary. They have returned to their mother's side.

The Stranger. And the father keeps his eyes fixed on the great pendulum of the clock . . .

Mary. They seem to be praying without knowing what they do . . .

The Stranger. They seem to be listening to their own souls . . . [*A pause.*]

Mary. Grandfather, do not tell them this evening!

The Old Man. You see, you are losing courage, too. I knew you ought not to look at them. I am nearly eighty-three years old, and this is the first time that the reality of life has come home to me. I do not know why all they do appears to me so strange and solemn. There they sit awaiting the night, simply, under their lamp, as we should under our own; and yet I seem to see them from the altitude of another world, because I know a little fact which as yet they do not know . . . Is it so, my children? Tell me, why are you, too, pale? Perhaps there is something else that we cannot put in words, and that makes us weep? I did not know that there was anything so sad in life, or that it could strike such terror to those who look on at it. And even if nothing had happened, it would frighten me to see them sit there so peacefully. They have too much confidence in this world. There they sit, separated from the enemy by only a few poor panes of glass. They think that nothing will happen because they have closed their doors, and they do not know that it is in the soul that things always happen, and that the world does not end at their house-

door. They are so secure of their little life, and do not dream that so many others know more of it than they, and that I, poor old man, at two steps from their door, hold all their little happiness, like a wounded bird, in the hollow of my old hands, and dare not open them . . .

Mary. Have pity on them, grandfather . . .

The Old Man. We have pity on them, my child, but no one has pity on us.

Mary. Tell them to-morrow, grandfather; tell them when it is light, then they will not be so sad.

The Old Man. Perhaps you are right, my child . . . It would be better to leave all this in the night. And the daylight is sweet to sorrow . . . But what would they say to us to-morrow? Misfortune makes people jealous; those upon whom it has fallen want to know of it before strangers—they do not like to leave it in unknown hands. We should seem to have robbed them of something.

The Stranger. Besides, it is too late now; already I can hear the murmur of prayers.

Mary. They are here—they are passing behind the hedges. [*Enter Martha.*]

Martha. Here I am. I have guided them hither —I told them to wait in the road. [*Cries of children are heard.*] Ah! the children are still crying. I forbade them to come, but they want to see, too, and the mothers would not

obey me. I will go and tell them—no, they have stopped crying. Is everything ready? I have brought the little ring that was found upon her. I have some fruit, too, for the child. I laid her to rest myself upon the bier. She looks as though she were sleeping. I had a great deal of trouble with her hair—I could not arrange it properly. I made them gather marguerites—it is a pity there were no other flowers. What are you doing here? Why are you not with them? [*She looks in at the windows.*] They are not weeping! They—you have not told them!

The Old Man. Martha, Martha, there is too much life in your soul; you cannot understand

. . .

Martha. Why should I not understand? [*After a silence, and in a tone of grave reproach.*] You ought not to have done that, grandfather

. . .

The Old Man. Martha, you do not know . . .

Martha. I will go and tell them.

The Old Man. Remain here, my child, and look for a moment.

Martha. Oh, how I pity them! They must wait no longer . . .

The Old Man. Why not?

Martha. I do not know, but it is not possible!

The Old Man. Come here, my child . . .

Martha. How patient they are!

The Old Man. Come here, my child . . .

Martha [*turning*]. Where are you, grandfather? I am so unhappy, I cannot see you any more. I do not myself know now what to do . . .

The Old Man. Do not look any more; until they know all . . .

Martha. I want to go with you . . .

The Old Man. No, Martha, stay here. Sit beside your sister on this old stone bench against the wall of the house, and do not look. You are too young, you would never be able to forget it. You cannot know what a face looks like at the moment when Death is passing into its eyes. Perhaps they will cry out, too . . . Do not turn round. Perhaps there will be no sound at all. Above all things, if there is no sound, be sure you do not turn and look. One can never foresee the course that sorrow will take. A few little sobs wrung from the depths, and generally that is all. I do not know myself what I shall do when I hear them—they do not belong to this life. Kiss me, my child, before I go. [*The murmur of prayers has gradually drawn nearer. A portion of the crowd forces its way into the garden. There is a sound of deadened footfalls and of whispering.*]

The Stranger [*to the crowd*]. Stop here—do not go near the window. Where is she?

A Peasant. Who?

The Stranger. The others—the bearers.

A Peasant. They are coming by the avenue that leads up to the door. [*The Old Man goes out.*

Martha and Mary have seated themselves on the bench, their backs to the windows. Low murmurings are heard among the crowd.]

The Stranger. Hush! Do not speak. [*In the room the taller of the two sisters rises, goes to the door, and shoots the bolts.*]

Martha. She is opening the door?

The Stranger. On the contrary, she is fastening it. [*A pause.*]

Martha. Grandfather has not come in?

The Stranger. No. She takes her seat again at her mother's side. The others do not move, and the child is still sleeping. [*A pause.*]

Martha. My little sister, give me your hands.

Mary. Martha! [*They embrace and kiss each other.*]

The Stranger. He must have knocked—they have all raised their heads at the same time—they are looking at each other.

Martha. Oh! oh! my poor little sister! I can scarcely help crying out, too. [*She smothers her sobs on her sister's shoulder.*]

The Stranger. He must have knocked again. The father is looking at the clock. He rises . . .

Martha. Sister, sister, I must go in too—they cannot be left alone.

Mary. Martha, Martha! [*She holds her back.*]

The Stranger. The father is at the door—he is drawing the bolts—he is opening it cautiously.

Martha. Oh!—you do not see the . . .

The Stranger. What?

Martha. The bearers . . .

The Stranger. He has only opened it a very little. I see nothing but a corner of the lawn and the fountain. He keeps his hand on the door —he takes a step back—he seems to be saying, "Ah, it is you!" He raises his arms. He carefully closes the door again. Your grandfather has entered the room . . . [*The crowd has come up to the window. Martha and Mary half rise from their seat, then rise altogether and follow the rest towards the windows, pressing close to each other. The Old Man is seen advancing into the room. The two Sisters rise; the Mother also rises, and carefully settles the Child in the armchair which she has left, so that from outside the little one can be seen sleeping, his head a little bent forward, in the middle of the room. The Mother advances to meet the Old Man, and holds out her hand to him, but draws it back again before he has had time to take it. One of the girls wants to take off the visitor's mantle, and the other pushes forward an armchair for him. But the Old Man makes a little gesture of refusal. The father smiles with an air of astonishment. The Old Man looks towards the windows.*]

The Stranger. He dares not tell them. He is looking towards us. [*Murmurs in the crowd.*]

The Stranger! Hush! [*The Old Man, seeing faces at the windows, quickly averts his eyes. As one of the girls is still offering him the*

armchair, he at last sits down and passes his right hand several times over his forehead.]

The Stranger. He is sitting down . . . [*The others who are in the room also sit down, while the Father seems to be speaking volubly. At last the Old Man opens his mouth, and the sound of his voice seems to arouse their attention. But the Father interrupts him. The Old Man begins to speak again, and little by little the others grow tense with apprehension. All of a sudden the Mother starts and rises.*]

Martha. Oh! the mother begins to understand! [*She turns away and hides her face in her hands. Renewed murmurs among the crowd. They elbow each other. Children cry to be lifted up, so that they may see too. Most of the mothers do as they wish.*]

The Stranger. Hush! he has not told them yet . . . [*The Mother is seen to be questioning the Old Man with anxiety. He says a few more words; then, suddenly, all the others rise, too, and seem to question him. Then he slowly makes an affirmative movement of his head.*]

The Stranger. He has told them—he has told them all at once!

Voices in the Crowd. He has told them! he has told them!

The Stranger. I can hear nothing . . . [*The Old Man also rises, and, without turning, makes a gesture indicating the door, which is behind him. The Mother, the Father, and the two*

Daughters rush to this door, which the Father has difficulty in opening. The Old Man tries to prevent the Mother from going out.]

Voices in the Crowd. They are going out! they are going out! [*Confusion among the crowd in the garden. All hurry to the other side of the house and disappear, except the Stranger, who remains at the windows. In the room, the folding door is at last thrown wide open; all go out at the same time. Beyond can be seen the starry sky, the lawn and the fountain in the moonlight; while, left alone in the middle of the room, the Child continues to sleep peacefully in the armchair. A pause.*]

The Stranger. The child has not wakened! [*He also goes out.*]

THE INTRUDER

CHARACTERS

THE THREE DAUGHTERS
THE GRANDFATHER
THE FATHER
THE UNCLE
THE SERVANT

The present translation of *The Intruder,* the fifth of M. Maeterlinck's plays to appear in the present series, is the anonymous version published by Mr. HEINEMANN in 1892, the editor having, however, made some slight alterations in order to bring it into conformity with the current French text. The particular edition used for this purpose was the 1911 (twenty-third) reprint of Vol. I. of M. Maeterlinck's *Théâtre.*

A. L. G.

THE INTRUDER

[*A dimly lighted room in an old country-house. A door on the right, a door on the left, and a small concealed door in a corner. At the back, stained-glass windows, in which the colour green predominates, and a glass door opening on to a terrace. A Dutch clock in one corner. A lamp lighted.*]

The Three Daughters. Come here, grandfather. Sit down under the lamp.

The Grandfather. There does not seem to me to be much light here.

The Father. Shall we go on to the terrace, or stay in this room?

The Uncle. Would it not be better to stay here? It has rained the whole week, and the nights are damp and cold.

The Eldest Daughter. Still the stars are shining.

The Uncle. Ah! stars—that's nothing.

The Grandfather. We had better stay here. One never knows what may happen.

The Father. There is no longer any cause for anxiety. The danger is past, and she is saved . . .

The Grandfather. I fancy she is not going on well . . .

The Father. Why do you say that?

The Grandfather. I have heard her speak.

The Father. But the doctors assure us we may be easy . . .

The Uncle. You know quite well that your father-in-law likes to alarm us needlessly.

The Grandfather. I don't look at these things as you others do.

The Uncle. You ought to rely on us, then, who can see. She looked very well this afternoon. She is sleeping quietly now; and we are not going to spoil, without any reason, the first comfortable evening that luck has thrown in our way . . . It seems to me we have a perfect right to be easy, and even to laugh a little, this evening, without apprehension.

The Father. That's true; this is the first time I have felt at home with my family since this terrible confinement.

The Uncle. When once illness has come into a house, it is as though a stranger had forced himself into the family circle.

The Father. And then you understood, too, that you should count on no one outside the family.

The Uncle. You are quite right.

The Grandfather. Why could I not see my poor daughter to-day?

The Uncle. You know quite well—the doctor forbade it.

The Grandfather. I do not know what to think . . .

The Uncle. It is absurd to worry.

The Grandfather [*pointing to the door on the left*]. She cannot hear us?

The Father. We shall not talk too loud; besides, the door is very thick, and the Sister of Mercy is with her, and she is sure to warn us if we are making too much noise.

The Grandfather [*pointing to the door on the right*]. He cannot hear us?

The Father. No, no.

The Grandfather. He is asleep?

The Father. I suppose so.

The Grandfather. Some one had better go and see.

The Uncle. The little one would cause *me* more anxiety than your wife. It is now several weeks since he was born, and he has scarcely stirred. He has not cried once all the time! He is like a wax doll.

The Grandfather. I think he will be deaf—dumb too, perhaps—the usual result of a marriage between cousins . . . [*A reproving silence.*]

The Father. I could almost wish him ill for the suffering he has caused his mother.

The Uncle. Do be reasonable; it is not the poor little thing's fault. He is quite alone in the room?

The Father. Yes; the doctor does not wish him to stay in his mother's room any longer.

The Uncle. But the nurse is with him?

The Father. No; she has gone to rest a little; she has well deserved it these last few days. Ursula, just go and see if he is asleep.

The Eldest Daughter. Yes, father. [*The Three Sisters get up, and go into the room on the right, hand in hand.*]

The Father. When will your sister come?

The Uncle. I think she will come about nine.

The Father. It is past nine. I hope she will come this evening, my wife is so anxious to see her.

The Uncle. She is certain to come. This will be the first time she has been here?

The Father. She has never been into the house.

The Uncle. It is very difficult for her to leave her convent.

The Father. Will she be alone?

The Uncle. I expect one of the nuns will come with her. They are not allowed to go out alone.

The Father. But she is the Superior.

The Uncle. The rule is the same for all.

The Grandfather. Do you not feel anxious?

The Uncle. Why should we feel anxious? What's the good of harping on that? There is nothing more to fear.

The Grandfather. Your sister is older than you?

The Uncle. She is the eldest of us all.

The Grandfather. I do not know what ails me; I feel uneasy. I wish your sister were here.

The Uncle. She will come; she promised to.
The Grandfather. I wish this evening were over!
[*The Three Daughters come in again.*]
The Father. He is asleep?
The Eldest Daughter. Yes, father; very sound.
The Uncle. What shall we do while we are waiting?
The Grandfather. Waiting for what?
The Uncle. Waiting for our sister.
The Father. You see nothing coming, Ursula?
The Eldest Daughter [*at the window*]. Nothing, father.
The Father. Not in the avenue? Can you see the avenue?
The Daughter. Yes, father; it is moonlight, and I can see the avenue as far as the cypress wood.
The Grandfather. And you do not see any one?
The Daughter. No one, grandfather.
The Uncle. What sort of a night is it?
The Daughter. Very fine. Do you hear the nightingales?
The Uncle. Yes, yes.
The Daughter. A little wind is rising in the avenue.
The Grandfather. A little wind in the avenue?
The Daughter. Yes; the trees are trembling a little.
The Uncle. I am surprised that my sister is not here yet.
The Grandfather. I cannot hear the nightingales any longer.

The Daughter. I think some one has come into the garden, grandfather.

The Grandfather. Who is it?

The Daughter. I do not know; I can see no one.

The Uncle. Because there is no one there.

The Daughter. There must be some one in the garden; the nightingales have suddenly ceased singing.

The Grandfather. But I do not hear any one coming.

The Daughter. Some one must be passing by the pond, because the swans are scared.

Another Daughter. All the fishes in the pond are diving suddenly.

The Father. You cannot see any one?

The Daughter. No one, father.

The Father. But the pond lies in the moonlight . . .

The Daughter. Yes; I can see that the swans are scared.

The Uncle. I am sure it is my sister who is scaring them. She must have come in by the little gate.

The Father. I cannot understand why the dogs do not bark.

The Daughter. I can see the watch-dog right at the back of his kennel. The swans are crossing to the other bank! . . .

The Uncle. They are afraid of my sister. I will go and see. [*He calls.*] Sister! sister! Is that you? . . . There is no one there.

The Daughter. I am sure that some one has come into the garden. You will see.

The Uncle. But she would answer me!

The Grandfather. Are not the nightingales beginning to sing again, Ursula?

The Daughter. I cannot hear one anywhere.

The Grandfather. And yet there is no noise.

The Father. There is a silence of the grave.

The Grandfather. It must be some stranger that scares them, for if it were one of the family they would not be silent.

The Uncle. How much longer are you going to discuss these nightingales?

The Grandfather. Are all the windows open, Ursula?

The Daughter. The glass door is open, grandfather.

The Grandfather. It seems to me that the cold is penetrating into the room.

The Daughter. There is a little wind in the garden, grandfather, and the rose-leaves are falling.

The Father. Well, shut the door. It is late.

The Daughter. Yes, father . . . I cannot shut the door.

The Two Other Daughters. We cannot shut the door.

The Grandfather. Why, what is the matter with the door, my children?

The Uncle. You need not say that in such an extraordinary voice. I will go and help them.

The Eldest Daughter. We cannot manage to shut it quite.

The Uncle. It is because of the damp. Let us all push together. There must be something in the way.

The Father. The carpenter will set it right to-morrow.

The Grandfather. Is the carpenter coming to-morrow?

The Daughter. Yes, grandfather; he is coming to do some work in the cellar.

The Grandfather. He will make a noise in the house.

The Daughter. I will tell him to work quietly. [*Suddenly the sound of a scythe being sharpened is heard outside.*]

The Grandfather [*with a shudder*]. Oh!

The Uncle. What is that?

The Daughter. I don't quite know; I think it is the gardener. I cannot quite see; he is in the shadow of the house.

The Father. It is the gardener going to mow.

The Uncle. He mows by night?

The Father. Is not to-morrow Sunday?—Yes.—I noticed that the grass was very long round the house.

The Grandfather. It seems to me that his scythe makes as much noise . . .

The Daughter. He is mowing near the house.

The Grandfather. Can you see him, Ursula?

The Daughter. No, grandfather. He stands in the dark.

The Grandfather. I am afraid he will wake my daughter.

The Uncle. We can scarcely hear him.

The Grandfather. It sounds to me as if he were mowing inside the house.

The Uncle. The invalid will not hear it; there is no danger.

The Father. It seems to me that the lamp is not burning well this evening.

The Uncle. It wants filling.

The Father. I saw it filled this morning. It has burnt badly since the window was shut.

The Uncle. I fancy the chimney is dirty.

The Father. It will burn better presently.

The Daughter. Grandfather is asleep. He has not slept for three nights.

The Father. He has been so much worried.

The Uncle. He always worries too much. At times he will not listen to reason.

The Father. It is quite excusable at his age.

The Uncle. God knows what we shall be like at his age!

The Father. He is nearly eighty.

The Uncle. Then he has a right to be strange.

The Father. He is like all blind people.

The Uncle. They think too much.

The Father. They have too much time to spare.

The Uncle. They have nothing else to do.

The Father. And, besides, they have no distractions.

The Uncle. That must be terrible.

The Father. Apparently one gets used to it.

The Uncle. I cannot imagine it.

The Father. They are certainly to be pitied.

The Uncle. Not to know where one is, not to know where one has come from, not to know whither one is going, not to be able to distinguish midday from midnight, or summer from winter—and always darkness, darkness! I would rather not live. Is it absolutely incurable?

The Father. Apparently so.

The Uncle. But he is not absolutely blind?

The Father. He can perceive a strong light.

The Uncle. Let us take care of our poor eyes.

The Father. He often has strange ideas.

The Uncle. At times he is not at all amusing.

The Father. He says absolutely everything he thinks.

The Uncle. But he was not always like this?

The Father. No; once he was as rational as we are; he never said anything extraordinary. I am afraid Ursula encourages him a little too much; she answers all his questions . . .

The Uncle. It would be better not to answer them. It's a mistaken kindness to him. [*Ten o'clock strikes.*]

The Grandfather [*waking up*]. Am I facing the glass door?

The Daughter. You have had a nice sleep, grandfather?

The Grandfather. Am I facing the glass door?

The Daughter. Yes, grandfather.

The Grandfather. There is nobody at the glass door?

The Daughter. No, grandfather; I do not see any one.

The Grandfather. I thought some one was waiting. No one has come?

The Daughter. No one, grandfather.

The Grandfather [*to the Uncle and Father*]. And your sister has not come?

The Uncle. It is too late; she will not come now. It is not nice of her.

The Father. I'm beginning to be anxious about her. [*A noise, as of some one coming into the house.*]

The Uncle. She is here! Did you hear?

The Father. Yes; some one has come in at the basement.

The Uncle. It must be our sister. I recognized her step.

The Grandfather. I heard slow footsteps.

The Father. She came in very quietly.

The Uncle. She knows there is an invalid.

The Grandfather. I hear nothing now.

The Uncle. She will come up directly; they will tell her we are here.

The Father. I am glad she has come.

The Uncle. I was sure she would come this evening.

The Grandfather. She is a very long time coming up.

The Uncle. However, it must be she.

The Father. We are not expecting any other visitors.

The Grandfather. I cannot hear any noise in the basement.

The Father. I will call the servant. We shall know how things stand. [*He pulls a bell-rope.*]

The Grandfather. I can hear a noise on the stairs already.

The Father. It is the servant coming up.

The Grandfather. It sounds to me as if she were not alone.

The Father. She is coming up slowly . . .

The Grandfather. I hear your sister's step!

The Father. I can only hear the servant.

The Grandfather. It is your sister! It is your sister! [*There is a knock at the little door.*]

The Uncle. She is knocking at the door of the back stairs.

The Father. I will go and open it myself. [*He partly opens the little door; the Servant remains outside in the opening.*] Where are you?

The Servant. Here, sir.

The Grandfather. Your sister is at the door?

The Uncle. I can only see the servant.

The Father. It is only the servant. [*To the Servant.*] Who was that, that came into the house?

The Servant. Came into the house?
The Father. Yes; some one came in just now?
The Servant. No one came in, sir.
The Grandfather. Who is it sighing like that?
The Uncle. It is the servant; she is out of breath.
The Grandfather. Is she crying?
The Uncle. No; why should she be crying?
The Father [*to the Servant*]. No one came in just now?
The Servant. No, sir.
The Father. But we heard some one open the door!
The Servant. It was I shutting the door.
The Father. It was open?
The Servant. Yes, sir.
The Father. Why was it open at this time of night?
The Servant. I do not know, sir. I had shut it myself.
The Father. Then who was it that opened it?
The Servant. I do not know, sir. Some one must have gone out after me, sir . . .
The Father. You must be careful.—Don't push the door; you know what a noise it makes!
The Servant. But, sir, I am not touching the door.
The Father. But you are. You are pushing as if you were trying to get into the room.
The Servant. But, sir, I am three yards away from the door.
The Father. Don't talk so loud . . .

The Grandfather. Are they putting out the light?

The Eldest Daughter. No, grandfather.

The Grandfather. It seems to me it has grown pitch dark all at once.

The Father [*to the Servant*]. You can go down again now; but do not make so much noise on the stairs.

The Servant. I did not make any noise on the stairs.

The Father. I tell you that you did make a noise. Go down quietly; you will wake your mistress. And if any one comes now, say that we are not at home.

The Uncle. Yes; say that we are not at home.

The Grandfather [*shuddering*]. You must not say that!

The Father. . . . Except to my sister and the doctor.

The Uncle. When will the doctor come?

The Father. He will not be able to come before midnight. [*He shuts the door. A clock is heard striking eleven.*]

The Grandfather. She has come in?

The Father. Who?

The Grandfather. The servant.

The Father. No, she has gone downstairs.

The Grandfather. I thought that she was sitting at the table.

The Uncle. The servant?

The Grandfather. Yes.

The Uncle. That would complete one's happiness!

The Grandfather. No one has come into the room?

The Father. No; no one has come in.

The Grandfather. And your sister is not here?

The Uncle. Our sister has not come.

The Grandfather. You want to deceive me.

The Uncle. Deceive you?

The Grandfather. Ursula, tell me the truth, for the love of God!

The Eldest Daughter. Grandfather! Grandfather! what is the matter with you?

The Grandfather. Something has happened! I am sure my daughter is worse! . . .

The Uncle. Are you dreaming?

The Grandfather. You do not want to tell me! . . . I can see quite well there is something . . .

The Uncle. In that case you can see better than we can.

The Grandfather. Ursula, tell me the truth!

The Daughter. But we have told you the truth, grandfather!

The Grandfather. You do not speak in your ordinary voice.

The Father. That is because you frighten her.

The Grandfather. Your voice is changed too.

The Father. You are going mad! [*He and the Uncle make signs to each other to signify the Grandfather has lost his reason.*]

The Grandfather. I can hear quite well that you are afraid.

The Father. But what should we be afraid of?

The Grandfather. Why do you want to deceive me?

The Uncle. Who is thinking of deceiving you?

The Grandfather. Why have you put out the light?

The Uncle. But the light has not been put out; there is as much light as there was before.

The Daughter. It seems to me that the lamp has gone down.

The Father. I see as well now as ever.

The Grandfather. I have millstones on my eyes! Tell me, girls, what is going on here! Tell me, for the love of God, you who can see! I am here, all alone, in darkness without end! I do not know who seats himself beside me! I do not know what is happening a yard from me! . . . Why were you talking under your breath just now?

The Father. No one was talking under his breath.

The Grandfather. You did talk in a low voice at the door.

The Father. You heard all I said.

The Grandfather. You brought some one into the room! . . .

The Father. But I tell you no one has come in!

The Grandfather. Is it your sister or a priest?—You should not try to deceive me.—Ursula, who was it that came in?

The Daughter. No one, grandfather.
The Grandfather. You must not try to deceive me; I know what I know.—How many of us are there here?
The Daughter. There are six of us round the table, grandfather.
The Grandfather. You are all round the table?
The Daughter. Yes, grandfather.
The Grandfather. You are there, Paul?
The Father. Yes.
The Grandfather. You are there, Oliver?
The Uncle. Yes, of course I am here, in my usual place. That's not alarming, is it?
The Grandfather. You are there, Geneviève?
One of the Daughters. Yes, grandfather.
The Grandfather. You are there, Gertrude?
Another Daughter. Yes, grandfather.
The Grandfather. You are here, Ursula?
The Eldest Daughter. Yes, grandfather; next to you.
The Grandfather. And who is that sitting there?
The Daughter. Where do you mean, grandfather?—There is no one.
The Grandfather. There, there—in the midst of us!
The Daughter. But there is no one, grandfather!
The Father. We tell you there is no one!
The Grandfather. But you cannot see—any of you!
The Uncle. Pshaw! You are joking?

The Grandfather. I do not feel inclined for joking, I can assure you.

The Uncle. Then believe those who can see.

The Grandfather [*undecidedly*]. I thought there was some one . . . I believe I shall not live long . . .

The Uncle. Why should we deceive you? What use would there be in that?

The Father. It would be our duty to tell you the truth . . .

The Uncle. What would be the good of deceiving each other?

The Father. You could not live in error long.

The Grandfather [*trying to rise*]. I should like to pierce this darkness! . . .

The Father. Where do you want to go?

The Grandfather. Over there . . .

The Father. Don't be so anxious . . .

The Uncle. You are strange this evening.

The Grandfather. It is all of you who seem to me to be strange!

The Father. Do you want anything? . . .

The Grandfather. I do not know what ails me.

The Eldest Daughter. Grandfather! grandfather! What do you want, grandfather?

The Grandfather. Give me your little hands, my children.

The Three Daughters. Yes, grandfather.

The Grandfather. Why are you all three trembling, girls?

The Eldest Daughter. We are scarcely trembling at all, grandfather.

The Grandfather. I fancy you are all three pale.

The Eldest Daughter. It is late, grandfather, and we are tired.

The Father. You must go to bed, and grandfather himself would do well to take a little rest.

The Grandfather. I could not sleep to-night!

The Uncle. We will wait for the doctor.

The Grandfather. Prepare me for the truth.

The Uncle. But there is no truth!

The Grandfather. Then I do not know what there is!

The Uncle. I tell you there is nothing at all!

The Grandfather. I wish I could see my poor daughter!

The Father. But you know quite well it is impossible; she must not be awaked unnecessarily.

The Uncle. You will see her to-morrow.

The Grandfather. There is no sound in her room.

The Uncle. I should be uneasy if I heard any sound.

The Grandfather. It is a very long time since I saw my daughter! . . . I took her hands yesterday evening, but I could not see her! . . . I do not know what has become of her . . . I do not know how she is . . . I do not know what her face is like now . . . She must have changed these weeks! . . . I felt the little bones of her cheeks under my hands . . . There is nothing but the darkness between her and me,

and the rest of you! . . . I cannot go on living like this . . . this is not living . . . You sit there, all of you, looking with open eyes at my dead eyes, and not one of you has pity on me! . . . I do not know what ails me . . . No one tells me what ought to be told me . . . And everything is terrifying when one's dreams dwell upon it . . . But why are you not speaking?

The Uncle. What should we say, since you will not believe us?

The Grandfather. You are afraid of betraying yourselves!

The Father. Come now, be rational!

The Grandfather. You have been hiding something from me for a long time! . . . Something has happened in the house . . . But I am beginning to understand now . . . You have been deceiving me too long!—You fancy that I shall never know anything?—There are moments when I am less blind than you, you know! . . . Do you think I have not heard you whispering —for days and days—as if you were in the house of some one who had been hanged—I dare not say what I know this evening . . . But I shall know the truth! . . . I shall wait for you to tell me the truth; but I have known it for a long time, in spite of you!—And now, I feel that you are all paler than the dead!

The Three Daughters. Grandfather! grandfather! What is the matter, grandfather?

The Grandfather. It is not you that I am speak-

ing of, girls. No; it is not you that I am speaking of . . . I know quite well you would tell me the truth—if they were not by! . . . And besides, I feel sure that they are deceiving you as well . . . You will see, children—you will see! . . . Do not I hear you all sobbing?

The Father. Is my wife really so ill?

The Grandfather. It is no good trying to deceive me any longer; it is too late now, and I know the truth better than you! . . .

The Uncle. But *we* are not blind; we are not.

The Father. Would you like to go into your daughter's room? This misunderstanding must be put an end to.—Would you?

The Grandfather [*becoming suddenly undecided*]. No, no, not now—not yet.

The Uncle. You see, you are not reasonable.

The Grandfather. One never knows how much a man has been unable to express in his life! . . . Who made that noise?

The Eldest Daughter. It is the lamp flickering, grandfather.

The Grandfather. It seems to me to be very unsteady—very!

The Daughter. It is the cold wind troubling it . . .

The Uncle. There is no cold wind, the windows are shut.

The Daughter. I think it is going out.

The Father. There is no more oil.

The Daughter. It has gone right out.

The Father. We cannot stay like this in the dark.
The Uncle. Why not?—I am quite accustomed to it.
The Father. There is a light in my wife's room.
The Uncle. We will take it from there presently, when the doctor has been.
The Father. Well, we can see enough here; there is the light from outside.
The Grandfather. Is it light outside?
The Father. Lighter than here.
The Uncle. For my part, I would as soon talk in the dark.
The Father. So would I. [*Silence.*]
The Grandfather. It seems to me the clock makes a great deal of noise . . .
The Eldest Daughter. That is because we are not talking any more, grandfather.
The Grandfather. But why are you all silent?
The Uncle. What do you want us to talk about? —You are really very peculiar to-night.
The Grandfather. Is it very dark in this room?
The Uncle. There is not much light. [*Silence.*]
The Grandfather. I do not feel well, Ursula; open the window a little.
The Father. Yes, child; open the window a little. I begin to feel the want of air myself. [*The girl opens the window.*]
The Uncle. I really believe we have stayed shut up too long.
The Grandfather. Is the window open?
The Daughter. Yes, grandfather; it is wide open.

The Grandfather. One would not have thought it was open; there was not a sound outside.

The Daughter. No, grandfather; there is not the slightest sound.

The Father. The silence is extraordinary!

The Daughter. One could hear an angel tread!

The Uncle. That is why I do not like the country.

The Grandfather. I wish I could hear some sound. What o'clock is it, Ursula?

The Daughter. It will soon be midnight, grandfather. [*Here the Uncle begins to pace up and down the room.*]

The Grandfather. Who is that walking round us like that?

The Uncle. Only I! only I! Do not be frightened! I want to walk about a little. [*Silence.*] —But I am going to sit down again;—I cannot see where I am going. [*Silence.*]

The Grandfather. I wish I were out of this place!

The Daughter. Where would you like to go, grandfather?

The Grandfather. I do not know where—into another room, no matter where! no matter where!

The Father. Where could we go?

The Uncle. It is too late to go anywhere else. [*Silence. They are sitting, motionless, round the table.*]

The Grandfather. What is that I hear, Ursula?

The Daughter. Nothing, grandfather; it is the

leaves falling.—Yes, it is the leaves falling on the terrace.

The Grandfather. Go and shut the window, Ursula.

The Daughter. Yes, grandfather. [*She shuts the window, comes back, and sits down.*]

The Grandfather. I am cold. [*Silence. The Three Sisters kiss each other.*] What is that I hear now?

The Father. It is the three sisters kissing each other.

The Uncle. It seems to me they are very pale this evening. [*Silence.*]

The Grandfather. What is that I hear now, Ursula?

The Daughter. Nothing, grandfather; it is the clasping of my hands. [*Silence.*]

The Grandfather. And that? . . .

The Daughter. I do not know, grandfather . . . perhaps my sisters are trembling a little? . . .

The Grandfather. I am afraid, too, my children. [*Here a ray of moonlight penetrates through a corner of the stained glass, and throws strange gleams here and there in the room. A clock strikes midnight; at the last stroke there is a very vague sound, as of some one rising in haste.*]

The Grandfather [*shuddering with peculiar horror*]. Who is that who got up?

The Uncle. No one got up!

The Father. I did not get up!

The Three Daughters. Nor I!—Nor I!—Nor I!

The Grandfather. Some one got up from the table!

The Uncle. Light the lamp! . . . [*Cries of terror are suddenly heard from the child's room, on the right; these cries continue, with gradations of horror, until the end of the scene.*]

The Father. Listen to the child!

The Uncle. He has never cried before!

The Father. Let us go and see him!

The Uncle. The light! The light! [*At this moment, quick and heavy steps are heard in the room on the left.—Then a deathly silence.—They listen in mute terror, until the door of the room opens slowly, the light from it is cast into the room where they are sitting, and the Sister of Mercy appears on the threshold, in her black garments, and bows as she makes the sign of the cross, to announce the death of the wife. They understand, and, after a moment of hesitation and fright, silently enter the chamber of death, while the Uncle politely steps aside on the threshold to let the three girls pass. The blind man, left alone, gets up, agitated, and feels his way round the table in the darkness.*]

The Grandfather. Where are you going?—Where are you going?—The girls have left me all alone!